

# Socio - Economic Concerns of Return Emigrants: A Case Study on Goa

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**Abstract - Goa has a long history of migration. The return emigration is an important facet of the migration dynamics in Goa. These return emigrants ensured an uninterrupted flow of remittance from Gulf during their economically active days. They had to return back to their native place due to several reasons. Back at home they face lot of difficulties & discrimination. In spite of their valuable contributions, they are treated as an ‘uninvited guest’ by family, society & state. The study examines the difficulties encountered by return emigrants back at home & recommends state intervention for their rehabilitation.**

**Keywords: Return emigrants, Discrimination, Uninvited Guest**

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the migration domain of Goa, terms like ‘*Bombaistas*’ or ‘*Mumoicares*’, ‘*Africanders*’, ‘*Tarvottis*’ and ‘*Gulfees*’ are very familiar. The Portuguese who were among the first of the Europeans to set out on voyages of discovery, described their overseas mission with the word ‘conquista’ (Robinson, 1994, pg.1125).

The Portuguese conquered Goa in episodes. Only one fifth of the geographical area of Goa (Old Conquest) was under the colonial power for 450 years. The remaining portion of Goa (New Conquest) was under Portuguese rule for less than 200 years<sup>v</sup>. The map ( annexure-1) shows the regions Old and New conquests.

The Old and New conquests represented differences in number of aspects- cultural, social and religious. The proselytizing<sup>vi</sup> campaign along with the ‘Lusitanisation’<sup>vii</sup> process created a new image which also helped the Goan’s in out-migration.

The origin of Goan emigration can be traced back to the time of the French Revolution<sup>viii</sup>. The Portuguese arrival affected the main occupation – farming<sup>ix</sup> - in the coastal districts of Bardez, Salcete and Tiswadi. From the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, these factors together with the increasing job opportunities worldwide led to a substantial international migration, which progressively encompassed a great cross section of the Catholic population.

The beginning of the 1970’s was characterized by massive migration to the Middle East especially the Gulf countries - and the ‘rate of out migration got accelerated since 1980’ [Roy et al., 1986, p.65]. Goa, particularly from mid 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards witnessed the large-scale international migration predominantly of Catholic Goans (Stella,1990,

pg.111-113). The early migrants served as a pace-setter and their letters / periodic visits to Goa provided opportunities to extol the virtues of the new life, thus producing powerful stimuli to the migration of peers & juniors (Stella, 1999, pg. 246).

Late 1990’s saw return emigration due to number of economic, political and personal reasons. A large numbers of them are returning back to the state especially from Gulf countries. The return emigrant’s faces lot of problems back at home- social, cultural, economic, psychological and health related.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Of late, return emigrants from Gulf region flocked back to Goa for a wide variety of reasons. But there are no major studies to access the socio-economic problems faced by return emigrants back in Goa. Further, there are no reliable statistics on return emigrants reaching the state. Hence as a starting point, this paper has used studies on return emigrants (Zachariah C K, et. al. 2001) in Kerala.

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<sup>1</sup> People migrated to Mumbai and other parts of British India.

<sup>1</sup> People migrated to British Africa.

<sup>1</sup> Sailors working on ship.

<sup>1</sup> People migrated to Gulf countries.

<sup>1</sup> The territory conquered by the Portuguese in sixteenth century is called as ‘Old Conquest’ (Velhas Conquista), and the ones in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as ‘New Conquest’ (Nova Conquista).

<sup>1</sup> Proselytize = to Christianize (Priolkar, 1962,p.50-60).

<sup>1</sup> Lusitanise means to make Portuguese. Various steps like giving Portuguese way and outlook of life, names, dress code, dietary habits, language, etc. were taken to lusitanise the Goan society.

<sup>1</sup> In 1779, British Government stationed their naval fleet near Goa to safe guard Indian possession from to the proposed the threat of French Revolutionaries employed Goan as cooks, butlers, pantry boys, dhobis, bakers, tailors, musicians, ayahs, etc. .

<sup>1</sup> The low productivity in agricultural sector was due to the changes in the ownership pattern of land, inadequate public investment in agriculture and the consequent fragmentation of land holdings due to the implementation of Portuguese Civil Code. This along with Proselytisation campaign and the ‘Lusitanisation process held the youth of Bardez, Salcete and Tiswadi seek service jobs abroad. This was the view held by Almedia(1967),Pinto(1960),D’Costa(1965) &Stella(1988).

The Goa Migration Study (2009, pg.61-69) estimates the return emigrants at 5.40% per 100 households. The study also found that the major share of return emigrants are Christians, especially from Bardez, Salcette and Tiswadi talukas.

### III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- a. To understand the reasons for the emigrant's return.
- b. To understand the socio-economic problems of return emigrants.
- c. To suggest appropriate policy measures for their rehabilitation.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data for the present study was generated through primary & secondary sources. Primary data was collected by administering a questionnaire. The non-probability sample population was randomly selected from different places in Salcete taluka, South Goa. One hundred & fifty return migrants were personally interviewed. The term 'return emigrants' include only male family members who have permanently returned back home from Gulf countries. Only those who were back in Goa for last 5 years were interviewed. The present study is an exploratory study and examined only the socio-economic problems of return migrants.

### IV. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

In the study, 75 respondents were working in Kuwait, 30 each in UAE and Bahrain, and 15 in Saudi Arabia. One hundred & two return emigrants were back in Goa for a period ranging from 5- 7years, forty one for more than 7 years and the remaining seven for less than 5 years.

The respondent cited multiple reasons for their decision to permanently return to Goa from Gulf regions. Following are the reasons:

- a. Old age of the respondent
- b. Deteriorating health conditions
- c. Retrenchment
- d. Non-renewal of work visa
- e. Poor working conditions
- f. Absence of promotional avenues in the present job
- g. Discrimination
- h. Inferior living conditions in Gulf
- i. Pressure from family and other close relatives for early return
- j. Sick parents
- k. Litigations with neighbours
- l. Indiscipline among the children

Out of the 150 respondents, only thirty four are currently employed. Of these, 13 were self-employed. Remaining 116 return emigrants are involuntarily unemployed. They remained unemployed because of declining health, absence of suitable employment in their immediate neighbourhood, unable to find a job suitable for their status which they acquired through Gulf migration.

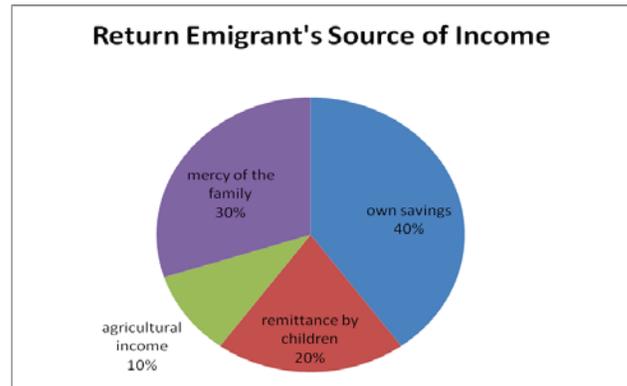


Fig.1 The respondent's source of income at present

The respondents reported that they faced various types of discrimination and neglect from the family and society. The return emigrants were ignored and not consulted in crucial family decisions. Family exhibited aggressive attitude and indecent behaviour towards them. They were considered to be an 'uninvited guest' at home with no financial, health and psychological support. Family members even declined to accompany them for family, religious and social functions.

The catchment society also neglected and discriminated the return emigrants. They were considered as strangers and useless by the society. The people in neighbourhood were disinterested even to talk to them. The society reluctantly invited return emigrants for socio-religious functions. As citizens, they were ignored and had no say in social, political and religious decisions of their catchment society. They were not even given due respect by the society.

The return emigrants were discriminated and neglected because of number of reasons. They cited following reasons for their present plight.

- a. Inadequate income
- b. Long absence from the family and country
- c. Generation gap
- d. Lack of family attachment
- e. Feeling that the return emigrant were superfluous for sustaining family and society
- f. Poor health conditions
- g. Absence of moral support from family

Following propositions were provided by the return emigrants for improving their present plight:

- a. Society and family should be more considerate and their attitude to return emigrants should change.
- b. Elaborate insurance and health facilities
- c. Promoting SHG's among the return emigrants from Gulf
- d. Encouraging their active participation in local self governing institutions.
- e. Optimum utilization of the expertise and skill of return emigrants
- f. Creation of local employment and investment opportunities
- g. Formation of a specialised cell in the Non-Resident Goan's Commission for addressing the problems and concerns of return emigrants.
- h. Establishment of psychological counselling centres
- i. Provision of old age pension to return emigrants

According to return emigrants, state has to play a very important role in mitigating their problems and difficulties. They suggested that the state should formulate and introduce an elaborate rehabilitation package and welfare schemes as early as possible.

## V. CONCLUSIONS & POLICY SUGGESTIONS

From the study it is very clear that the life of return emigrants is a matter of serious concern. Even after making lot of sacrifices during their active life in Gulf countries for sky-rocketing their remittances, they are at present discriminated and neglected. The society and family considers them to be uninvited guests with no role in decision-making. They also lack financial, health and moral support from family. According to the return emigrants, their present plight is basically due to inadequate income and long absence from family, immediate society and country.

- a. The study strongly recommends the need for the active intervention of the state in the problems and concerns of the return emigrants. With the availability of cheaper labour from new destinations, the magnitude of return emigrants are bound to increase. The state should implement an elaborate rehabilitation package for bringing the return emigrants back to the economic and social mainstream.
- b. Welfare schemes for meeting the health and financial needs should be implemented through health insurance and old age pension schemes. Facilities should be created for their skill up-gradation and new skill formation. The expertise of

the return emigrants should be tapped by promoting their Self Help Groups (SHGs) and co-operatives. The state should plan and implement long term investment projects for tapping their savings when they were actively participating in economic activities at Gulf. Such investment opportunities can give them adequate income during the time when they qualify as return emigrants. In this process, state can ensure sufficient financial resources for the development activities of the state.

- c. The state can also ensure easy availability of loans and advances to return emigrants at concessional rates for getting self-employed. The skill and expertise of the return emigrants should be tapped by the local self governments for formulating and implementing different schemes.
- d. The state government should set up counselling cells for meeting the psychological needs of the return emigrants. A cell needs to be created in Non-Resident Goan (NRG) commission to address the problems and concerns of the return emigrants.
- e. Many of the return emigrants are facing 'psychological- stress' due to the negative attitude of the family and society. The civil society and its stake-holders should tap the available social capital in order to educate and motivate the family and society to change their negative attitude towards return emigrants.

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**ANNEXURE-I**

