



# OVERSEAS MIGRATION OF STUDENTS FROM KERALA

<sup>1</sup> Sajin Philip, <sup>2</sup> Dr Ranjith Mathew Abraham,

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, <sup>2</sup> Professor

<sup>1</sup> Department of Economics,

<sup>1</sup> St. Cyril's College, Adoor

**Abstract** It is generally a distinguished fact that Kerala is renowned as one of India's most literate states, abundant with efficient and hardworking young generation. As per the NIRF 2020 evaluation, 20 Kerala institutions are included among the top 100 universities in India. However, the perception of students in Kerala is that there is a strong aspiration to pursue higher education abroad and thereby obtaining an appropriate career advancement. This study is an elaborate attempt to elucidate the reason for the migration of students in Kerala and cherishing the ambition in obtaining permanent residence after graduation/further study abroad.

**Index Terms** - Migrant Student, Brain drain, Education.

## INTRODUCTION

It is a well-known phenomenon that Kerala is one of the established educational hubs in India which attracts migrant students from other states and other countries as well. In the recent times, Kerala has been experiencing a huge increase in students moving abroad especially to America, England, Canada, Australia etc for higher studies, and eventually settling there as permanent residence or nationality. In this regard, it is perceived that Kerala is witnessing a galloping stage, whereby there is a steady trend of youngsters moving abroad for higher education as well as settlement and Malayali students & migrants are stretched found all over the world. This exodus is continuing in rapid pace and in steady momentum.

As per the data available the number of Indian students in abroad in various categories were 40 lakh in 2012 and this proportion is expected to rise to 75 lakh in year 2025. As a reliable source of information, the data presented by the Ministry of Education before the Parliament in February this year, it has been observed that there is a considerable increase of 68% in the number of students going abroad for higher studies from India. More precisely, the number of migrant Indian students increased from 4,44,553 in 2021 to 7,50,365 in 2022. Nevertheless, the Kerala High Court while exploring this situation recently attributed the reason behind the trend of youngsters leaving the native place for better prospects to the lack of infrastructure and aesthetic appeal in Kerala's cities in general. It must be noted that the students who have migrated to various foreign countries in 2019 was 30,948. Further, in overall 13,64,536 students are doing higher studies in the state in variety of aspects. More intensely, A comprehensive study by the Centre for Development Studies established that around 1.5 million people from Kerala were working or attending higher education overseas in conformity to their visions and ambitions. In detail, the study also revealed that the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) were the most preferred travel destinations of the migrant students of Kerala.

## STUDENTS LEAVING KERALA



The number of students who left Kerala for studies in foreign countries in the recent years is as follows:

2016 –	18,428
2017 –	22,093
2018 –	26,456
2019 –	30,948
2020 –	15,277
2021 (Till February) –	5,040

### RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

It highlights the intensive impacts on Kerala society as a result of Migration of youths for foreign education/career application and subsequent / related shortage of human resources and availability in the home land. There has been no advanced study on the economic impact of migration so far and hence this issue still needs to be explored and streamlined. The implication of current students becoming the future Kerala diaspora and its consequent economic impact needs to be elaborately studied as per Government initiative.

### THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand about the aspirations of young migrating people between 18-25
2. To identify and find out the underlying reasons while leaving the country to abroad tracing the initial steps adopted by them in realizing this goal.

### METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

In extensive study, this research adopted a quantity approach based on both primary and secondary data collection. In order to be ample precise, reliable and accurate, large scale face-to-face survey conducted for data collection including representatives' youth aged between 18 to 26 on sampling basis maintaining 95% confidence level. In advancing, representative sampling administered by using two-stage stratification (i.e. by region and by settlement type (size) within each region), both in proportional to its size. The survey was managed by circulating wide range questionnaire contains comprehensive questions related to respondents' demographic structure, socio-economic characteristics, satisfaction with the selected living environment and different life aspects in the original place of Kerala, and in addition the key motives & inspiration for migration. To be more conclusive, Kochi has been chosen for this study to understand the internal migration and by means of it the main sources of secondary data for this study are collected from the research articles from the internet.

## DATA ANALYSIS

A structured Questionnaire was prepared containing (three diagnostic blocks) such as

- A. Status of young people-While assessing the status of young people in Kerala a set of elegant questions presented based on persisting socio– demographic characteristics of young people, their perspectives about of the quality of life in Kerala as well as their level of trust in political institutions and establishments.
- B. Migration potential of young people-A set of questions circulated among the potential migrants and assessment accomplished on this basis.
- C. The forces driving migration-This block covers identification and analysis of most predominant reasons that leads to migration.

## Sampling:

Snowball sampling method was adopted to collect the information from the respondents Sample size was fixed at 150 Questionnaires had been distributed. The collected data will be analyzed through statistical tools like reliability analysis, percentage analysis and, chi-square tests Statistical data analysis was conducted with the use of SPSS software package.

## KEY FINDINGS & RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The integral findings and observations of this research essentially identified the key driving forces of Migration and reached final conclusion for the complicated question Why Do People Leave Their Homes.

### 1.NEIGHBORHOOD EFFECT

The reflection of neighborhood effect was very transparent in such society. If anyone in the neighborhood or our peer group goes out of the country, it would later become a chain action, which in turn would pursue others in near vicinity to follow the same process. The peer groups share collective information related to the money being spent and availability of various courses congenial to them and their aptitude. Middle class families depend on bank loans available to them and afford to repay in installments, as usual practice. This situation paved the way for most of the students proceeding to go out of the country by availing educational loans from various banks in our country.

### 2.LACK OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The one instance of a student called Govind, a 25-year-old from Thiruvananthapuram, who went to Canada in September 2021 with the purpose of joining a postgraduate course in Supply and Chain Management there is interesting. Prior to the decision taken for migration, preparation was done for the Kerala Public Service Commission exams in addition to bank tests to get suitable jobs as per his preference. However, at point of time, he felt about the futility in waiting for settling a career in native place and adapted his mindset to go abroad. Upon making final choice, he selected Canada since getting a PR (Permanent Residence status) was comparatively easier there. There is a feasibility that one person can also go on a student visa and get a PR subsequently. According to him, the trend is very prominent more than those days he left and as informed by his mother many young people in his neighborhood becoming aspirants and going abroad for studies.

### 3. BETTER LIVING

The option for improving personal as well as family financial situation. Sense of stability aspect persisting in migrating countries and feeling of social security & less corrupt social system circulation.

### 4.STATUS SYMBOL OF FAMILY

It becomes a status symbol for families and even being judged while their children are educated / professionally settled abroad in prominent countries such as Canada, Germany, USA and UK etc. In a wide perspective, Kerala will experience brain drain as it is going to lose the cream of human resources since they are our great strength and asset. Earlier the trend was limited to highly professional courses like MBBS but now students at early stage even after finishing higher secondary school education are migrating to other countries.

## 5. PEER PRESSURE AND PRESSURE EXERTED BY PARENTS

Peer pressure and pressure exerted by parents the spurt and intensity of agencies that facilitating overseas admission for students, influence of prevailing social conditions including moral standards of pertaining people, education loanobtainability etc.

**6. LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE:** Students usually migrate from one place to another within India is because of the lack of infrastructure at their home place. Majority of students from Northern states move to Karnataka and other states, because these states can provide them with better infrastructure in education and better facilities.

**7. PREFERRED EDUCATIONAL COURSES:** Many of the institutions in India do not have wide variety of courses which serves as one of the reasons for the students to move out of their hometown.

## ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

In general perception, it is visible that all the students are not choosing credible and recognized courses abroad, but there is formidable number of students as well highly influenced by the opportunity in foreign countries to do work simultaneously with studies. The part-time jobs that our students do in other countries like working in restaurants and shops may not be lucrative / unattainable in-home state, or there is unwillingness to perform likewise here. There is an initiative in the state also to delegate a scheme for students to work while studying. However, the current student migration is not alarming since the migrating is within certain limit at present. Ultimately, this migration resulted in over 25,000 vacant seats in engineering colleges and over 10,000 seats vacant in arts and science colleges all over Kerala state. It is a deep concern that if this current migration trend persisting, it will lead Kerala to becoming a state for the elderly people.

By means of Brain circulation skills, know-how, and other experience gained by our migrants in another country - whether they have returned or not can be utilized in the home state as well. In this juncture, these highly skilled / experienced academic and technical migrants can in turn create social and professional networks to mobilize human & financial capital, enable transfer of skill and information technology deliver start-up ideas, collaborative business plans etc. Periodically, they can work as cross-country linkages for whenever there are opportunities. In the globalized labor market, these skilled migrations can open doors for business ideas, entrepreneurship opportunities and investment plans. In general, conditioning our labor and technological policies are key and vital in achieving the benefits of brain sufficiently.

## CONCLUSION

Students in Kerala are becoming pickier while choosing their educational career. They want to imbibe a global perspective and practical knowledge-based education. This expounded study concludes by proving that limited seats in governmental institutions, exorbitant fees in non-governmental institutions in home-country and quality of education in foreign country were the major reasons which motivates the students in Kerala to pursue their higher education in abroad. Here in this outlook, it points out the propensity of the students to stay or get permanent residence after education is influenced by limited job opportunity in Kerala and the quality of life they will get in foreign country. Looking at the number of Keralites flee to abroad for higher studies, Government should investigate the possibility to lessen the migration and solution to increase the returning of students. Governments must take initiatives to promote collaboration between higher education institution in Kerala and international universities. Universities in India should frame a proper policy for students to do part time work permit along with their studies. Overall, this study depicts the better understanding of Keralites reason for pursuing higher education abroad.

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