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Political Economy of Migration From Kerala: The Case of International Migration of Keralite Nurses To U.K

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ABSTRACT

Kerala state in India has got the unique distinction of being the state with one of the highest literacy rates in the country. Also, Kerala has got a remarkable track record of migration of skilled professionals to other parts of India and also elsewhere in the world. The case of trained nurses is no exception in this regard. Over the years there has been a steady rise in the migration of nurses from Kerala to other parts of the world. In fact, nurses from Kerala constitute vast majority of those who migrate abroad from the whole of India. In the above backdrop, this paper makes a closer look into the migration phenomenon of nurses from Kerala, the political economy of migration including the major destinations of nurses migrating from Kerala, the implications of such migrations on Kerala economy and suggests suitable strategies.

Keywords: Non-Resident Keralites (NRKs), Migration Destinations, Political Economy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Because Keralites are the one of the most literate ones in the whole of India, they have never been reluctant to migrate to various parts of the country as well as abroad. Keralites have been migrating to anywhere in the world, to wherever there is a demand of educated professionals, like, teachers, health sector workers, accountants and other. With the oil boom in Gulf, people from Kerala started migrating to Gulf areas too. The trend of migration continued and migrants started exploring other terrains in developed nations like United States (US), United Kingdom (UK), Canada, etc. Till the formation of Kerala state on 01st Nov. 1956, Kerala used to be, by and large, an in-migrating state, but gradually it became an out-migrating state. It may be noted that ever since 1961, the state has been a classic example of an out-migrating state in the whole of India, till date; and moreover, it has been ahead of India in terms of migration. As per Kerala Migration Survey 2003, number of emigrants (EMI) in 1999 was 13.6 lakhs and in 2004 it was18.4 lakhs. Number of return emigrants (REM) in the year 1999 was 7.4 Lakhs and in 2004 it was 8.9 lakhs. (Kodoth & Jacob, 2013) [7].

Migration of nurses affects different countries in different ways and there is a troubling pattern of growing disparity in which poor nations with the fewest nurses are losing them to wealthy countries with the most nurses. The migration of nurses also brings into focus an issue of fair treatment to the migrated health personnel in the destination country. The case of Signal International in 2005, although not related to health personnel, busted the myth of fair and lawful treatment of migrants in the developed OECD countries including the United States of America (USA). This case has underlined the necessity of understanding and reviewing the migration laws, processes, routes and treatment of migrants in the destination country. (Sudhakar, P. M, 2013) [13]. Regarding the migration of nurses from India, it is noted that vast majority of them are from Kerala, and moreover most of them are women also. In short, women nurses from Kerala constitute a significant share among the nurses migrating from India.

2. RELEVANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Right from the 1970s there has been a push of Keralite (or, Malayali) nurses, mostly from the central Travancore belt of Tiruvalla-Kottayam, to overseas destinations became visible. The initial years saw them target cities and small towns in Germany, the United Kingdom (UK), Italy, Belgium and France. The second wave that followed found nurses heading for the shores of the United States (US), Canada and Australia, and simultaneously a swell began to target Kuwait, Iraq, Qatar, Oman, the UAE and Saudi Arabia. What was initially frowned upon by society soon became a fad when the foreign remittances dramatically transformed

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the ways and means of hundreds of families where nurses became principal bread-winners. If the European and American nurses of Indian origin began by earning the equivalent of a few lakh rupees a month, among those in the Gulf countries, the better off are those in Kuwait, Qatar, UAE and Oman in excess of Rs 1 lakh, followed by Saudi Arabia with around Rs 60,000, while fetching up close behind with around Rs 30,000-40,000 were those in Iraq and Libya. Therefore, it may be stated that migrant nurses from Kerala who are working elsewhere in the world do derive significant financial earnings vis-à-vis their counterparts working in Kerala state itself or even other parts of India. This is one of the major motivators behind the international migration of nurses from Kerala to advanced countries like the UK and US.

In view of the foregoing discussion, it can be seen that there have been obvious benefits because of international migration of nurses from Kerala to nations like the UK and US; and these include the huge inward remittances to the home state viz. Kerala. Remittances from Non-Resident Keralaites (NRKs), often called NRK remittances, in fact, form a major source of funds for the banks in Kerala, particularly the Kerala-based private banks like Federal Bank. The purchasing power and standard of living of the households of the migrants would rise leading to higher consumption and greater demand in the economy. This results in economic development of Kerala. However, the long term sustainability of such economic benefits as well as the quantum of such benefits depends on the decision of the migrants to return to the home state and also making further investments here, including continuation of their career or professional engagements. But, it is noted that sizeable share of them prefer permanent residency abroad. So, it is relevant to make a study of the political economy of international migration of nurses from Kerala, their major destinations abroad, and such allied aspects so that suitable remedial strategies can be framed making their migration beneficial to the economy of the home state.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

(i) To make a cursory review of the developments in the nursing sector of Kerala state and also the case of migration of nurses from Kerala to other parts of the world;

(ii) To study the political economy of international migration of nurses from Kerala, including the destination countries of migration and remittances by Non-Resident Keralites (NRKs);

(iii) To make suitable suggestions for the effective use of migration for the economic development of Kerala, based on the findings of the present study.

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The nature of this study is descriptive-analytical as well as exploratory. It focuses on the health workers (nurses) migrating abroad from the state of Kerala, households of such nurses. The political economy of such global migration of nurses, including implications of such migration, like, destination countries preferred by the such nurses, their preference to permanent residency abroad or to returning back to the home state etc. Data from authentic sources like statistics on the nurses published by Dept. of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Kerala, are used for this study.

5. NURSING SECTOR IN KERALA AND THE MIGRATION OF MIGRATION OF NURSES FROM KERALA

It is estimated that today over 10 percent of the population of Kerala lives outside the state, in various parts of India, in the Gulf countries, US, UK and other countries across the world. Despite various estimates, there is no consensus amongthe researchers regarding the exact number of People of Kerala Origin (or, PKOs, in short) living in various states of India, and the world. These estimates vary between 3 to 4 million. Difficulty in estimating PKOs arises partly because it is not easy to count second and third-generation Keralites living in various parts of India or elsewhere in the world, over the years. However, there is higher clarity regarding the number of migrants living in the Gulf countries and also on the pattern of their migration to those countries over the past four decades or more. Over the last four decades, migration has been playing a major role in reducing the poverty, controlling unemployment and minimising relative deprivation in the state of Kerala. For more than 30 years there has been stable and constant migration from Kerala to the Gulf countries as well as other parts of India or elsewhere in the world. A study by the Centre for Development

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Studies, Trivandrum ('Migration and Development: Kerala Experience', S Irudaya Rajan, K C Zacharia, CDS, 2007) points out that there are around 2.27-3 million non-resident workers from Kerala. The proportion of migrant workers to the Gulf has declined from 95 percent in 1998 to 89 percent in 2007. (Zachariah, K. C. & Rajan, Irudaya, 2012). [17]. Kerala has a long history of the migration of nurses. In fact, Kerala's strengths in respect of higher education and health sector and many achievements in this regard provides the requisite rationale for more detailed research into the prospects of the mobility of nurses trained in this state. Though studies on the emigration of nurses from Kerala to Australia, USA and to the Gulf region have been done over the years, studies on the migration of nurses to UK are rather scarce. Studies done so far indicate that emigration of nurses from Kerala to European countries is by and large personal and network-driven (Walten-Roberts, 2010) [15].

Table-I: Training Institutes for Nurses in South India

States	2004		2007		2010	
	BSc	GNM	BSc	GNM	BSc	GNM
Karnataka	67	154	285	458	311	520
Andhra Pradesh	39	91	167	222	211	244
Tamil Nadu	36	54	80	122	131	164
Kerala	5	74	83	172	97	218
Total	147	423	615	974	750	1146
All India Total	187	684	833	1597	1244	2028
South India's share	78%	62%	74%	62%	60%	57%

Source: European University Institute, CARIM India – Developing a Knowledge Base for Policymaking on India-EU Migration

Empirical studies done recently have underscored the predominance of Kerala-based nurses among the nurses from India who have migrated abroad. Nurses from Kerala ('Keralite' or 'Malayalee' nurses) working abroad are mostly Christian women. But, the community of nursing students today in Kerala is much more diverse in composition than it was previously. Today, Hindus and Muslims together comprise almost 50 percent of the total in one large sample of nursing students, the share of Hindus intending to migrate was only a little less than that of the Christians (Walton Roberts, 2010) [15]. The social composition of aspiring nurses from Indian who intend to migrate to foreign countries like UK also is becoming more diverse. At present, the major destinations for Indian nurses are Gulf countries and the OECD nations. Nurses from Kerala dominated an estimated number of 60,000 Indian nurses working abroad in the Gulf countries (Percot, 2006) [13]. Though the programmes of nationalization of the workforces is being pursued since the 1980s these have not stemmed the flow in any serious way. A notable trend that there is an increasing trend in respect of the nurses from Kerala in the OECD countries. Majority of the nurses under the jurisdiction of the Kerala Nursing Council prefer the English-speaking destinations; as high as 38 percent of nurses from Kerala work in the US alone, another whopping 30 percent work in the UK, 15 percent in Australia, and 12 percent in the Gulf countries (Lum, 2012).

6. MAJOR DESTINATIONS OF NURSES MIGRATING FROM KERALA

The U.S. and the U.K. have been the most preferred destinations for migration for the nurses. However, strict laws for immigration and the ban on issuing H1B category Visa in the U.S. and increasingly hostile governmental approach in the U.K., accompanied by the global economic recession have forced the aspirant nurses to look for immigration prospects to other OECD countries. In the process, now Canada and Australia have emerged as the next most preferred destination countries for nurses. Australia and New Zealand are perceived as offering better chances in the nursing profession as well as better prospects of settling down there. Job prospects for nurses' spouses are also considered better in these two countries than any other OECD country at present, particularly in the skilled and semi-skilled work sphere. As far as Canada is concerned, it is perceived by the aspirant nurses as a spring-board to ultimately migrate to the U.S. in the near future. Although, its harsh climatic conditions and uncertain job prospects for spouses are cited by some of the aspirants as deterring factors, even then, Canada has been preferred more than Australia with the hope

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of going to the US from there. Although, Canada has stopped issuing Visas to the nurses in the second half of 2012, the aspirant nurses have been optimistic about re- start of the Visa-issuing process in the first half of 2013. The scarce population in these two OECD countries is viewed as a stable option for long term job prospects, i.e. less threat to migrant's employment there. Nurses from developing countries emphasize the economic motive as the principal reason for migration because the compensation packages in their home countries are far from attractive. In the home country they work for over eight hours a day and are paid very little. On the other hand, in countries like U.S. they are promised more than $45,000 per annum (in 2003). However, onward migration of nurses from countries that provide high salaries to others is only one indication of more diverse motivations. Migration is often considered as a life strategy for nurses in India (Percot, 2006). Increasingly, Indian nurses are using the Gulf countries, where salaries are attractive, as a stop on their journey to the OECD countries. 84 There is also significant movement of Indian nurses within the OECD countries. Prominently Indian nurses' in the UK and Ireland have indicated their intent to shift to the US, Canada and Australia. 85 86 Indian nurses are known for their preference for permanent residence in an OECD country compared for instance to Filipino nurses, the other large sending country of nurses (Alonso- Garbayo and Maben: 2009).87 This preference is likely to make them look for destinations that are relatively more secure. This factor needs to be factored in by the destination countries in their policies, if they are subject to chronic or cyclical shortages. The nurses we spoke to said better salaries were the main draw of overseas employment.

In the early 2000s the UK and Ireland became favored destinations for Indian nurses.91 Though salaries were higher in the US and in Australia, migration to these countries took longer (up to two years) compared to the UK or to Ireland (six months to a year) (Matsuno, 2006: 62, Pazhanilath, 2003). The tightening of immigration on account of the recession has brought to the fore the uncertainties of migration to Europe. The economic downturn has led to less favourable conditions of work in Ireland - wage reductions and tax increases – and non EU nurses are feeling insecure despite having permanent contracts (Humphries et al, 2012: 48).92 The non payment of overtime, part of the austerity, has substantially reduced the incentive for foreign staff to seek employment in Ireland and caused some of the Irish health professionals to consider job opportunities abroad (Bobek et al., 2011: 108). Notably, aspiring nurse migrants have pointed out that restrictive immigration policies and language barriers were curbing their movement to the other EU countries (Hazarika et al., 2011: 76). Social networks have served to promote destinations and also to dissuade nurses from going to particular destinations. In recent years, aspiring migrants were encouraged by their friends and 'seniors' to go to Australia and New Zealand but also dissuaded from going to the UK and Ireland (Hazarika et al., 2011).

Table-II: Trend of the Migration of Nurses from India and other Countries

Country	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Average
India	96	289	994	1830	3073	3690	3551	2436	1020	1887
	(220)	(201)	(244)	(84)	(68)	(20)	(-3.8)	(-31)	(-58)	(82.6%)
Philippines	1052	3396	7235	5593	4338	2521	1541	673	249	2955
	(1923)	(223)	(113)	(-23)	(-22)	(-42)	(-39)	(-56)	(-63)	(224%)
Australia	1209	1046	1342	920	1326	981	751	299	262	904
	(-9.4)	(-13)	(-28)	(-31)	(44)	(-26)	(-23)	(-60)	(-12)	(-11.6%)
Nigeria	208	347	432	509	511	466	381	258	154	363
	(16)	(67)	(24)	(18)	(0.4)	(-9)	(-18)	(-32)	(-40)	(2.9%)
South Africa	1460	1086	2114	1386	1689	933	378	39	39	1014
	(144)	(-26)	(95)	(-34)	(22)	(-45)	(-59)	(-90)	(0.0)	(0.7%)

Source: Adapted from IIMB Research & Publications [www.iimb.ernet.in]

[Figures in brackets refer to Year on Year growth rates in percentage terms].

7. POLITICAL ECONOMY OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION: REMITTANCES FROM MIGRANTS

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Today Kerala is on the threshold of a major transition in respect of migration, the consequences of which (both positive and negative) will play a vital role in shaping the fortune of this state. Earnings coming from remittances will fall and the extent of migration to the Gulf will decline as the Gulf region witnesses a saturation of the labour market. In the days to come, there will be higher competition for the skilled and semi-skilled jobs in India and also elsewhere in the world. So, a remittance-based and service sector-oriented economy like Kerala may face the problem of sustainability in the long run. Majority of the remittances to Kerala accrue from the unskilled workers whose consumption expenses in the Gulf are minimal because their families are not living with them. Barring Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Jordan, the remaining Gulf countries registered an increase in the flow in 2005 over 2004.Perhaps the most popular manner in which labour migrants remain connected with their former homes is through sending back money in the form of remittances. Indeed, remittances are today one of the largest flows of money in the world, rivaling global oil sales in sheer numbers (MPI, 2012).

Two world regions that currently see the largest interchange of workers and remittances are Latin America/US and Persian Gulf/South Asia. It is often difficult to calculate the precise amounts of money that are sent back as remittances each year because the practice can be extremely informal. While some foreign workers may transmit money through banks, money-transfer services (such as Western Union) or other official sources, the majority of remittances are transferred in ways that are not easily detectible. This may be like simply carrying cash back home in a suitcase or with the help of unofficial money brokers or lenders. The majority of funds go to families and friends, though many national governments are actively trying to convince their overseas workers to put their remittances towards more productive uses in things like development projects and businesses (Levitt and De La Hesa, 2003; Ley, 2004). A much smaller, though notable form of transnational economic practice includes investments and business ventures. For some overseas groups, like the Chinese Diaspora, the latter have been especially successful (though this is more in the case of trade-related migration rather than labour migration). But, growingly some labour migrants are putting their money into investment schemes, government bonds and funds and development projects at national, regional, local and neighborhood levels.

In the case of Kerala, remittances are often popularly called "Gulf Money" and have been described by the state government as "the most dynamic contribution to the economy of the State" and the government describes its labour migrants as "very high contributors" to state's economy. Indeed, Kerala is highly dependent on remittances to help support a much more affluent lifestyle than many other Indian states – the total remittances sent home by foreign workers was in 2011 some four times the state's entire domestic product (Zachariah and Irudayarajan, 2012). Other forms of economic impact of Non-Resident Keralites (NRK) include financial savings, real estate and business investments, and new home construction, in addition to creating business networks and developing financial expertise (Zachariah and Irudayarajan, 2008b). Kerala's utmost dependence on remittances has made it very vulnerable to economic and political shocks that could result in job cuts and resulting losses of revenues. The vulnerability of Kerala's economy to such shocks has been documented. In 1990, Iraq invaded and annexed Kuwait and soon after, the First Gulf War broke out. Thousands of guest workers based in Kuwait, including those from Kerala fled the country and returned home. This unexpected influx of returning migrants was a dual problem for Kerala, which was suddenly deprived of remittances from its citizens in Kuwait and also had to take care of the returnees, who did not know if and when they would be able to return to their jobs in the Gulf country. The first Gulf War ended in 1991 and many of the migrants returned to the Gulf countries, but during the period of the war, the Kerala economy was adversely affected.

In 2008, the global economic recession accelerated the pace of the return migration from labour receiving countries. Migrant flows to these countries have also fallen off since the beginning of the global financial crisis, which also affected the Gulf region unfavorably. Abandonment of large scale construction and infrastructural projects and economic crisis in the oil industry have pushed low paid migrant workers, particularly those in the Gulf countries to return to India temporarily or permanently. The unskilled migrants themselves are vulnerable due to unscrupulous middlemen who assure them good jobs in the Middle East in exchange for large sums of money, but sometimes don't deliver on

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this promise. Some employers in the Gulf countries are also known not to pay the migrant worker the wages that they are owed. As employers of low-skilled workers usually hold on to the migrants' passports until they return to their home country, this also places the migrant labourer in a vulnerable position. Economists predict that as the Middle Eastern labour market gets saturated, the flows of labour migrants from Kerala and hence remittances will decline and the state's economy will suffer. Although optimists argue that the Gulf has survived past crises like the Iraq-Kuwait war and that the migration from the state has kept up, a remittance-based economy may be unsustainable for Kerala in the long run.

8. POLITICAL ECONOMY OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION: FIVE DISTINCT WAVES OF MIGRATION

In the context of migration and large scale remittances from NRKs, it is relevant to study the five distinct waves of migration that occurred from Kerala over the years, and how each of these five patterns influenced the state's social and political process. Three issues are relevant here viz. (i) Socio-cultural shifts because of migration from Kerala, (ii) Economic and social consequences of Kerala's remittance-based economy; and (iii) Political consequences of migration from Kerala. Among the various states of India, people from Punjab, Gujarat and Kerala tend to migrate more across the world. This fact has got some historical precedent as these three states were exposed to cultures and people from abroad by means of trade. Kerala state has got a history of more than 2,300 years of connection with diverse cultures across the globe by way of its maritime trade relations. There was a different sort of migration from Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh to Southeast Asia, today's Cambodia, certain parts of Thailand, Indonesia, South Vietnam, and so in. Besides, there were Chola trade-based kingdoms in the south of today's Thailand. These all show the cultural exposure that shaped Kerala's historical worldview.

It was in the early 20th century that he first wave of migration from Kerala began. The first generation migrants were semi-skilled or quasi- professional workers to Ceylon (today's Sri Lanka), some parts of Malaya (to take jobs in plantations), Burma, Madras (today's Cennai), Calcutta (today's Kolkata), Karachi and Bombay (today's Mumbai). The knowledge and money they brought back had impact on Kerala's architecture and cooking to certain extent. It was after the World War II (from 1945 to 1960) that the second wave of migration began and migrants went to countries like Singapore, Malaysia, and also various parts of India, primarily to big cities like Bombay (today's Mumbai), Delhi, Calcutta (today's Kolkata), Madras (today's Cennai), and Bangalore. Most of the second generation migrants were high-school educated and were semi-skilled workers (like, typists, secretaries, office workers, army personnel etc). The third wave of migration occurred during the period from 1960 to 1975. The third generation migrants were mostly people having technical skills and professional training (like, engineering or technology professionals, nurses, clerks, technicians, etc). The afore-mentioned three waves of migration and the consequent inward remittances by the migrants, helped to influence land relationships and also instil a sense of 'Indianess' since a significant number of Keralites joined the pan-Indian middle class.

The fourth wave of migration occurred during the period 1975 to 1992 i.e. until the Kuwait war of 1992. The fourth generation witnessed mass migrations to the Gulf countries, USA, Germany, European countries etc. This wave triggered from increased incomes earned from high oil prices in the 1970s, scarcity of skilled labour needed for construction and infrastructure development in oil-based economies. People with ITI and nursing education could economically transform Kerala. The growing demand for nurses in the health sector encouraged a chain of migration to the US, Germany, etc. One nurse could possibly facilitate the migration of an average of 20 people. (Focus Migration, 2007).

The fifth wave of migration commenced from 1993 onwards and it had 2 to 3 streams, viz. (1) large migration of semi-skilled and unskilled labour from northern Kerala, like Malappuram and Kannur; (ii) migration of highly qualified professionals (engineers, doctors, IT professionals, academics etc.) to different parts of Europe, US, and other parts of the world; (iii) growing migration to US by means of the family networks of nurses who migrated to US and Europe during the fourth generation migration during the 1980s. (IIM, Study). There were clear caste and community connotations for migration;

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people from the Christian community migrated relatively early, probably because of the access to early education, lower stigma associated with skilled work and professions like nursing, and many Christians were marginal farmers too.

Consequent to large scale migration, the first half of the 20th century saw drastic changes in land-to-people ratio. People were forced to migrate within Kerala in search of land and outside Kerala in search of work. Many of the migrants could have been quasi-economic refugees in the feudal system or the ruling elite of a princely kingdom controlled by the Brahmin-Nair axis. Fourth generation migration included large numbers of Muslims, Ezhavas and people of other non-Christian communities. While the younger migrants of the first and second waves of migration were professionals (like, doctors, engineers, etc), the fourth wave of migration had primarily the lower middle class people. Also, while the first three waves of migration were confined to selected areas of Kerala (like, Palghat, central Travancore, parts of Malabar, and Kochi), the fourth wave of migration was much more broad-based across diverse castes, communities and regions. So, the fourth wave had the greatest impact on the socio-political relations, cultural landscape, and vital economic consequences. The fifth wave of migration had three layers (i) elites consisting of skilled professionals across the world; (ii) middle class skilled and semi- skilled workers; (iii) lots of unskilled labour in the second half of the 1990s, (Sudhakaran, P. M, 2013). The specific patterns of migration and their consequences had great impact on every aspect of society: land relationships, decline of agriculture, growth of consumer and service sectors, rise of education as an industry (and consequent emergence of capitation fees, courses of self-financing nature etc.) and a comparatively less skilled, less-resourceful young leadership pool for political parties. This had a great impact too, in terms of the structure and leadership of political parties. Communities with a comparatively higher stake in the power structure of Kerala viz. Nair-Namboothiri and were economically well-off too because of the access to land and feudal relationships, got into leadership positions in political parties.

9. IMPLICATIONS OF MIGRATION ON KERALA ECONOMY: NEED FOR REMEDIAL POLICIES

It has been noted that majority of the nurses migrating abroad belongs to Christian community and that financially too they are in a better position and can raise the requisite funds more easily. It is also noted that income concerns are significantly higher among the Christian migrant nurses. Over the years, there has been a few distinct waves of migration whereby people from other communities too have started migrating abroad at a growing pace, leading to an overall increase in the extent and nature of migration from Kerala. Consequently, the NRK remittances also have started growing fast year after year, resulting in positive impact on Kerala economy. Despite the clear positive impact of migration in terms of the inflow of funds to Kerala, the fact remains that majority of the migrants prefer permanent residence abroad rather than settling in Kerala and using their earnings in the home state (viz. Kerala) itself. This results in a 'brain drain' like situation and Kerala state gets less economic benefits. Hence, the remittances from the non-resident Keralites (NRKs) to Kerala, are often restricted to the early period of their career abroad. The State Government should strive to encourage maximum repatriation of their earnings and maximum possible investment of their earnings in the state itself. This ensures that the migration process is beneficial to the state's economy. In fact, NRK remittances have formed a major source of funds for the Kerala-based banks, especially the private sector banks such as Federal Bank and South Indian Bank. Channeling NRK-based funds for the economic growth of Kerala should be the immediate priority for the stakeholders. Besides, from a social perspective also, migration for the ultimate purpose of permanently residing abroad has started affecting the social environment of Kerala. The dependence on old age homes for taking care of the elderly parents of the migrants is a major issue. This has resulted in the mushrooming of old age homes in Kerala. Also, large scale migration leading to permanent residence abroad has resulted in the shrinkage in the Christian population in Kerala because of migrants from the Christian denomination form the vast majority of those who settle abroad. This fact is particularly true in respect of migration of nurses wherein the vast majority are from the Christian community.

10. CONCLUDING REMARKS

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In view of the foregoing discussions, it is noted that there is a vital need for policies that can facilitate the long-term sustainability of the migration phenomenon. For this, steps are required to attract the migrants to settle in Kerala itself rather than seeking permanent residence abroad. Regarding the policies required for enabling the economic development of the state using the remittances and other contributions by the migrant nurses from Kerala, the role of the Government should be that of a facilitator who can channel the resources from the migrant nurses for the development of the state. Appropriate directions to banks and financial institutions and bodies like State Level Bankers Committee (SLBC) in the above direction would be meaningful. Moreover, concerted efforts towards encouraging the migrant nurses (and other NRKs too) to invest in the home state itself are required from the part of the State Government. Support of the specialized undertakings like Non-Resident Keralites Affairs (NORKA) of the Govt. of Kerala is vital in this regard. Notwithstanding the obvious economic benefits because of NRK remittances, the long-term sustainability and scalability of the migration can be ensured only if the migrants return to Kerala and make their investments here itself. Besides, considering the dwindling population of Christian population in Kerala resulting from permanent residency opted by them abroad after migrating there, there should be concerted policy initiatives to attract such migrants to take up employment and/or business here in Kerala. This is turn would ensure greater levels of investments by NRKs in the state, something which is vital for the faster economic development of the state by way of accelerating the pace of industrialization.

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