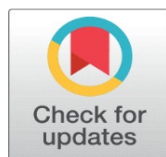


COVID 19 AND REMITTANCES: A STUDY ON KERALA ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

Covid 19 had a severe impact on migrant population in the world. India having the largest migrant population in the world was greatly affected during the pandemic. Kerala experienced tremendous flow in return migrants during Covid, and it was estimated to be 4 lakh and there was expected to be a loss of Rs 13000 crore annual remittances for the state. There were several issues faced by the return emigrants during Covid; loss of employment was an important concern of the state. Kerala Migration Survey 2021 that was conducted during the Covid period collected data from 1985 return emigrants (REM) covering 1871 households. The survey used CATI (Computer Assisted Telephonic Interviewing) Method which is broadly a non-probability sample. The paper uses KMS 2021 data to analyse the return emigration to Kerala during Covid-19 and tries to discuss remittances and causes for return emigration in the light of Covid. The return emigrants are classified into three categories which are normal return emigrants (NREM), distress return emigrants (DREM) and return to re-migrate (RREM). The paper looks at their characteristics, their reasons for return and remittances of return emigrants. The theories associated with return migration are studied in order to understand the nexus between remittances and return migration. The theoretical analysis along with the migration history of the state helps in the conceptual framework of migration and development discipline. As the state is known for migration to the Gulf and the growth of social sectors due to the external remittances from the migrants, the role of state in protecting its emigrants is vital. The state has tried to rehabilitate the return migrants through several programmes. The present paper looks at the return emigrants and their choices of remittances and future plans in the light of Covid. Therefore, the role of return emigrants in the development of the state requires further research and policy level interventions.

Keywords: Return Emigrants (REM), Remittances, Covid-19, Kerala Economy



1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid pandemic that hit the globe shook the migrant population all over the world. The pandemic along with the economic crisis have created lots of concerns for the immigrants. The unexpected turn of events led to sudden policy responses including travel bans, lockdowns and social distancing which brought the economic activities to a standstill. This left the migrants with the choice of returning home from the foreign land. The migrants chose to return on an emergency, so they were unprepared for such an event. They neither had a job back home nor were financially prepared. The return migrants were stigmatized as carriers of the virus (Rajan S. I., 2020). Indians represent 32 million in the diaspora and annually 25 lakh Indians migrate overseas, which is the highest in the world. Indian economy was greatly affected during the pandemic. This paper analyses the return migration to India by focusing on the state of Kerala. Kerala has a significant population of immigrants in foreign countries especially the Gulf countries (Zachariah, Kannan, & Rajan, 2002). The state economy receives huge foreign remittances from their NRIs, and it results in investment in agriculture

and non-farm economies and has helped to expand the consumption patterns of the people. Remittances varied according to educational levels of the migrants. The major end use of remittances was consumption; the other important uses were education, repayment of debt, construction and repair of buildings and bank deposits (Zachariah & Rajan, 2016). Kerala's economy is largely sustained by emigrant's remittances from gulf countries. Kerala has recorded fall in poverty during recent years of gulf-boom, and the rate of wages has also gone up very high; since the timing of such improvements coincides with the period of remittances it is to be inferred that the remittances operate as the power behind such changes (Joseph, 2001). It is important to analyse the return migrants and their conditions after Covid pandemic.

The migrants have several motifs behind their decision to migrate. Several studies show that remittances in several forms are one of the important economic motives. Probability to remit is not dominated by income alone; independent variables like age, education, gender, size of the household, employment and social dependency (Holst & Schrooten, 2006). Remittances can take different forms, but what is important is the motivation behind it. It is the mechanism with which they transfer a part of their gain from migration to their place of origin. Their motivation to remit may vary from supporting their family to buying property or other investment projects (Collier, Piracha, & Randazzo, 2011). Remittances play as an additional income to alleviate poverty, education of children, better health care, and financial security etc. (ibid). Since there are different types of migration like temporary, permanent, circular etc., what motivates the individual to remit still remains unclear. If the person decides to stay in the destination country permanently there might be a reduction in remittances, compared to a person who intends to return to home country. Temporary migrants remit regularly and consistently (Dustmann & Metres, 2010). The study also found that "the more likely a migrant is to return, the higher the probability of remitting for investment purposes" (ibid). Therefore, it can be argued that the type of migration also has an influence on the remittance of the individual, and it is based on the intentions of the individual. Migration from Kerala to the Gulf countries shows that end use of remittances is household consumption, followed by education, repayment of debt, construction and repairing of building and bank deposit (Zachariah, Mathew, & Rajan, 1999). The study also has categorized the migrant household depending on the value of the house and quality of housing. Based on this the present study aims at analyzing the post-covid impact of international migration. The state was able to achieve impressive socio-economic indicators and infrastructure, partly due to the remittances. Therefore, it is important to study the impact of covid on return emigrants and their investment pattern after the pandemic.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

It is not easy to thin down the migration process to a single theoretical understanding. Starting from the classical and neo-classical theory; it focuses on the wage differential factors as an important reason for migration. Later studies on labour market came up with theories like segmented labour market theory, social capital and migration network theory, human capital theory, new institutions theory and new economics of labour migration theory.

According to New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) family was considered as an important unit of analysis for decision making. Stark and Lucas are important theoreticians who have kept family decisions as a determinant of migration decision. There are two types of economic models, the first focuses on migrant's utility function and on individual decision: the second focuses on intra-family contract while taking the migrant family as the decision making unit (Stark, 1995). The altruistic nature focuses on the utility of the relatives left behind. Remittances is measured based on income as well as the degree of altruism, which in turn uses the personal ties between remitter and the recipient. Unlike classical and neo-classical theories which focus on wage aspect of migration, it is the new economics of labour migration theory that mainly talks about the reasons for considering family as a unit. The neoclassical economic theory is focused mainly on the wage differences and considers migration as an individual decision to maximise their incomes. The neo-classical theorists completely ignored the fact that migrants are heterogeneous and are part of a community. It is important to look at the benefits accrued by the non-migrants in their families and communities. Under the NELM framework, the remittances that are brought by the migrants is used to diversify their livelihood means. This theory talks about the social aspect by identifying and acknowledging the fact that migrants belong to a community and the process of migration can bring out economic development and growth within their community. In this way they act as agents of change who bring about advancement. The return migrants are viewed as agencies of change that bring about social advancement and create incomes for non-migrants as well. Theorists Stark and Bloom stated that NELM makes it easy to manage multifaceted realities of the migration and development nexus. According to this theory, migration is not an

individual decision, rather a collective decision that people take to bring up their family and community to a better position.

As per this theory, they use migrants as agencies of change who will bring about social advancement and betterment in their communities of origin. "New economics of labour migration theory regards migration as a family decision, aiming at minimizing the risks and overcoming temporary financial constraints. The dual work market theory and the global systems theory ignore, in general, the processes of adopting the decision to migrate on a micro level, focusing, in return, on the forces that act on a larger scale. It is not exclusively the individual that decides about migration. Rather, decisions are taken in the context of the family and the household, and migration is seen as a form of port-folio diversification by families" (Stark, 1991). He argues that "wider social entities have to be taken into account while migration decision is made" (ibid). When poor families have insufficient income, they sent only one member to work outside, so they sent remittances which will have a positive impact on the sending economy. This income differences acts as an incentive to send more people to other localities; it can be argued that migration will be higher in those areas which experience higher income inequality. The migrants who return brings social change and transformation in the societies.

NELM theory has highlighted the need to focus on migration not just as a labour market phenomenon but have also tried to incorporate non labour market aspects as well into the analysis. It has tried to locate migration process within a wider framework of not just labour market but also other forces that act in line with the migration decision making. This holistic approach has helped in the betterment of understanding and studying the migration process from different viewpoints. This theory gives a pluralist view on migration and development. They view return migration as a positive phenomenon as migration is on a temporary basis and the duration of their stay outside their native land is based on the need of the household in terms of their savings, purchasing power, and insurance. When they are able to meet those requirements, they prefer to move back. It can be understood from this analysis that, as per the new economics of migration "return migration goes beyond a response to negative wage differential" (Stark, 1991). Whereas neo-classical theory views return migration as a failure; therefore, NELM theory can also be used to analyse return migration in the light of Covid-19. It is in the backdrop of this understanding that the present paper further proceeds with the analysis and interpretation of Covid-return emigrants.

2.1. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the paper is to look at the return migration pattern in Kerala during Covid-19 and to analyse their investment pattern of return emigrants by applying logistic regression model.

3. METHODOLOGY

The paper uses Kerala Migration Survey 2021 data for analysis and interpretation. KMS 2021 is conducted by Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Trivandrum as part of a Research Program on International Migration and International Institute of Migration and Development (IIMAD). The survey used Computer Assisted Telephonic Interviewing (CATI) Method. The survey was conducted from January to May 2021 on a sample size of 1985 REM (return migrants) from 1871 households. The sample was randomly drawn from a list of expatriates who returned to Kerala between April 2020 and November 2020 from any international destination. The sample is not weighted against the population of the district, and hence lacks representation, and is broadly a non-probability sample.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. TYPES OF REM

The return migrants are classified into three categories depending on primary reasons for return. They are NREM (Normal Return Emigrants), DREM (Distress Return Emigrants) and RREM (Returned to Re-emigrate). The normal return emigrants are those who could have returned as per their plan, but the date was advanced due to the pandemic. The distress return emigrants are those who were affected by the pandemic and were forced to return.

Table 1 Primary Reason for Return by REM Type

Sl No.	Primary Reason for Return	NREM	DREM	RREM	Others	Total
1	To Retire	28	0	0	0	28
2	Missed Family	29	0	0	0	29

3	Care for Elderly	11	0	0	0	11
4	Accomplished Work	13	0	0	0	13
5	Prefer to Work in Kerala	13	0	0	0	13
6	Lost Job/Laid off	0	955	0	0	955
7	Illness/Accident	0	70	0	0	70
8	Expiry of Contract	0	89	0	0	89
9	Scared due to Covid-19	0	461	0	0	461
10	Compulsory Expatriation	0	36	0	0	36
11	Low Wages	0	58	0	0	58
12	Poor Working Conditions	0	27	0	0	27
13	Nationalisation Policy	0	7	0	0	7
14	Visiting Visa Expired	0	20	0	0	20
15	Cancellation of Employment Visa	0	28	0	0	28
16	To Re-emigrate to another Destination or Same Destination for Different Job	0	0	18		18
17	Others (Specify)	0	0	0	122	122
	Total	94	1751	18	122	1985

Source (Rajan S & Pattath, 2021)

Table 1 shows the different reasons for return migration and explains the categories of return emigrants. Among the returnee's 4.7 percent are normal return emigrants, whereas 88.2 percent are distress return emigrants and only 6.1 percent have returned to re-emigrate. From this table, it can be analysed that majority of the Covid return emigrants have not expected this kind of a change in their migration journey. Reasons from no.5 to no.15 shows distress return emigrants, and this change has resulted in the decisions of the migrants in several cases.

5. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF REM

The age pattern of migrants shows in figure 1 explains that 32.6 percent of return emigrants are in the age group of 30 to 39 years followed by 24.3 percent in the group of 40 to 49 years.

Figure 1

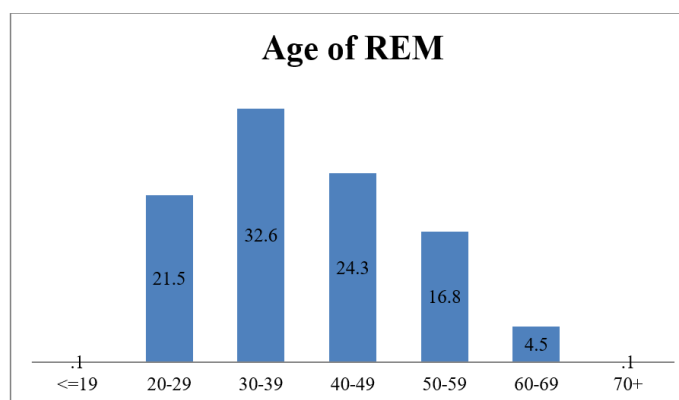


Figure 1 Age of REM

Source KMS 2021

Categorizing the age of return migrants with the type of REM shows that, out of the DREM 32.4 percent are in the age group of 30 to 39 years; 25.3 percent between 40 to 49 years and 21.5 percent between 20 to 29 years. Table 2 shows the cross tabulation of age with the types of REM.

Table 2 Cross Tabulation of Age with Types of REM

Age group	Types of REM			Total
	NREM	DREM	RREM	
<= 19	0	1	0	1
20-29	13	339	49	401
30-39	28	507	77	612

40-49	20	399	38	457
50-59	29	251	36	316
60-69	12	65	8	85
70 +	1	0	1	2
Total	103	1562	209	1874

Source KMS 2021

Majority of the return emigrants are in the category of distress return. Normal return emigrants are the oldest having average age of 45.8; youngest return emigrants are in RREM category having an average age of 34.8; and the younger category falls in distress return emigrants having an average age of 39.5 years (Rajan S & Pattath, 2021). With regard to Covid, the emigrants who returned felt that theirs' was an unplanned and unsatisfied return. The decision to have a permanent migration comes after fulfilling the migration requirements back home. Therefore, the younger population in the sample opted for re-migrate to other countries or the same countries to accomplish their needs.

Figure 2

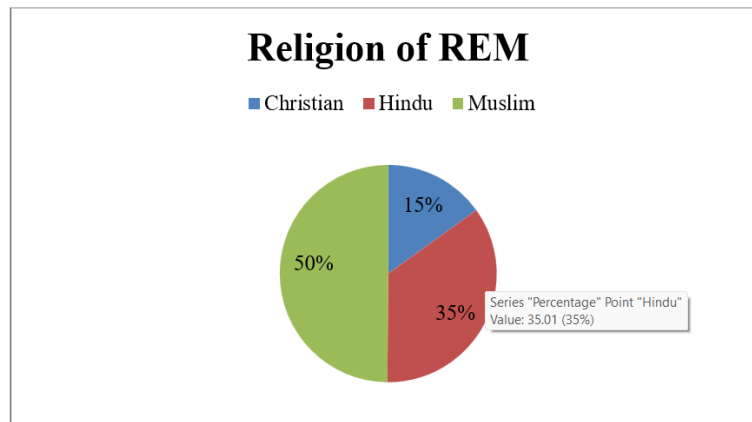


Figure 2 Religion of REM in Percentage

Source (Rajan S & Pattath, 2021)

Figure 2 shows the religion of the sample, where 50 percent of the REM are from Muslim community followed by 35 percent Hindus and remaining 15 percent Christians. Majority of the return emigrants are male population (93%) and they are from rural locality (73%). 21 percent of REM are from Malappuram district; followed by 13 percent from Kozhikode which are in northern Kerala. Table 3 shows the destination countries of return emigrants.

Table 3 Destination Countries of REM

Country	Frequency	Percentage
UAE	422	22.5
Bahrain	253	13.5
Kuwait	216	11.5
Oman	188	10
Qatar	156	8.3
Saudi Arabia	178	9.5

Source KMS 2021

Table 3 explains that 22.5 percent of return emigrants are in UAE; 13.5 percent in Bahrain and 11.5 percent in Kuwait. Several studies have shown that Gulf countries are a major destination of Kerala migrants since the 90s (Zachariah, Kannan, & Rajan, 2002; Zachariah & Rajan, 2016; Zachariah, Mathew, & Rajan, 1999). These studies show that remittances from the nonresident Keralites have led to investment in Kerala economy in all sectors especially in manufacturing and construction sector.

6. COVID-19 AND REMITTANCES

Covid-19 affected the international migrants in Kerala; uncertainties in the form of job loss, decreased wages, lack of social protection led to large scale return migration. The return emigrants have been classified into three categories, normal return emigrants (REM), distress return emigrants (DREM) and returned to re-emigrate (RREM) which are discussed in the previous section. The data collected shows that 75 percent of them sent remittances before Covid-19; it was used for debt payment (30%), household expenses (25%), periodic investment (21%) and maintenance (12%) (Rajan S & Pattath, 2021). Figure 3 shows the categories into which remittances are sent by return migrants.

Figure 3

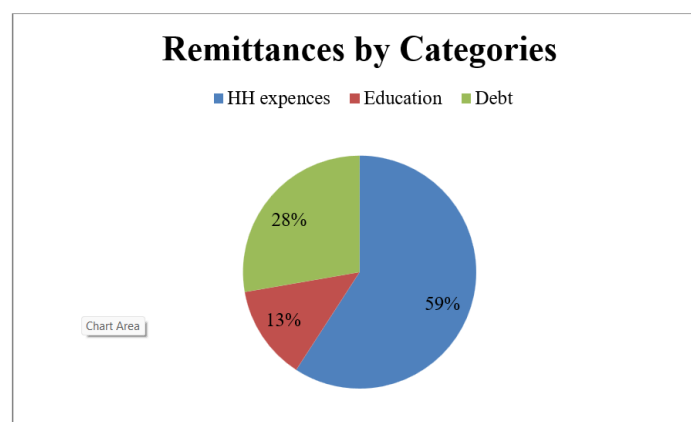


Figure 3 Remittances by Categories
Source KMS 2021

After the first lockdown, the data above shows that, remittances were made to household expenses, followed by repayment of debt and education. There are other categories like remittances in gold, cash, fixed deposit and land were also made.

A correlation test was done between the primary reasons for migration and total remittances. The output shows a significant relationship between the two variables. But a negative correlation is shown between the variables. Remittance is an important part of migration. The pre and post covid remittances of the return migrants show an increase; as majority of the return migrants are distress return, their way of responding to the unexpected event is by increasing the remittances. By this means, they are trying to secure their future by sending maximum and thereby keeping their future safe. The pre and post covid remittance demonstrates that there is an overall increase in monthly remittances which suggests that the remittances post lockdown increased (Rajan S & Pattath, 2021). The monthly remittances have increased especially among the lower quartile; among DREM the percentage of remittances fell from 89.8 to 86 percent; among NREM, remittances increased from 68.6 to 97.3 percent. They were trying to send their accumulated savings to their home country.

The table 5 shows the cross tabulation of remittances with future plans of the REM pre-Covid and table 6 shows remittances with future plans of REM post-covid lockdown.

Table 5 Percentage of Pre-Covid Remittances and Future plan of Return Emigrants: Pre Covid Lockdown

PreCovid Remittance	Start a New Business	Re-emigrate to get a new job	Re-emigrate to the same jobs before	Retired from work	Seek new job in Kerala	Others	Total
<10000	15.8	26.3	21.1	0.0	31.5	5.3	100
10000-19000	7.0	43.1	10.9	1.0	35.4	2.6	100
20000-28000	10.1	29.2	15.8	3.0	33.5	8.4	100
30000-40000	13.6	26.4	13.6	2.4	39.2	4.8	100
>40000	15.6	29.9	22.5	3.4	27.4	1.2	100
Total	12.6	32.1	17.9	2.7	31.4	3.3	100

Source (Rajan S & Pattath, 2021)

Table 6 Percentage of Post-Covid Remittances and Future plan of Return Emigrants: Pre Covid Lockdown

Post Covid Remittance	Start a New Business	Re-emigrate to get a new job	Re-emigrate to the same jobs before	Retired from work	Seek new job in Kerala	Others	Total
<10000	20.0	20.0	20.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	100
10000-19000	11.8	45.1	7.8	2.0	33.3	0.0	100
20000-28000	19.7	40.9	10.6	1.5	25.8	1.5	100
30000-40000	17.2	37.9	13.8	0.0	31.1	0.0	100
>40000	17.0	27.7	19.8	2.3	31.1	2.1	100
Total	16.8	33.8	15.6	1.8	30.5	1.5	100

Source (Rajan S & Pattath, 2021)

These two tables show the remittances of return migrants pre and post covid. A comparison of the table 5 and table 6 explains the different categories of future plans of the migrants and how the remittances were allotted for each option available. Those who have remitted to start a new business have increased overall from 12.6 percent to 16.8 percent; remittances and migration to the same jobs as before having decreased from 17.9 to 15.6 percent; the plan to re-emigrate to new job has increased from 32.1 to 33.8 percent. In the overall figures remittances show an increasing trend. The increase in the lower quartile of remittances shows a higher increase than that of the higher quartile. The data on the table is evident in a way that the future plan of the return migrants to remain Kerala and start a new venture is in a way more reliable to the migrants. The idea to re-integrate to Kerala economy and seek employment in Kerala is shown by 57 percent of return emigrants. The state has tried to rehabilitate the return migrants through several programmes. Therefore, the role of return emigrants in the development of the state requires further research and policy level interventions.

7. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF PRE-RETURN REMITTANCES

This study uses a logistic regression framework to investigate the remittance behavior of return migrants in the 12 months prior to return. Whether or not a migrant household received remittances in the year before the return is the binary variable of interest here. Because OLS regression assumes linearity, homoscedasticity, and normally distributed errors, it is not suitable for such binary outcomes (Collier, Piracha and Randazzo, 2011). Outside of the logical probability range of 0 and 1, applying OLS to a dependent variable with a value between 0 and 1 would result in ineffective, biased, and occasionally nonsensical predictions. The standard method for examining dichotomous dependent variables is logistic regression, which models the event's log-odds and guarantees that predicted probabilities stay within the range of 0 and 1.

The survey answers in Block of Remittance, which inquired as to whether migrants had sent any money during the 12 months prior to the lockdown, are used to create the dependent variable. If the respondent reported remitting, a value of 0 is assigned; if not, a value of 1. The probability that the binary outcome equals one, which represents the latent propensity not to remit during that time, is thus captured by the model. Because remittance behavior is multifaceted, the explanatory variables are taken from various survey sections. Included are sociodemographic traits like age, gender, occupation, and industry of employment. Factors related to migration history, including the country of migration, length of stay overseas, cause of migration, and legal status of entry, are also significant (Vargas-Lundius et al., 2008). Prior research has consistently demonstrated how the length of migration influences migrants' capacity to transfer resources as well as their attachment to their home households. The analysis includes vulnerability and reintegration dimensions, such as social reintegration, coping mechanisms, and access to government assistance, in addition to demographic and migration factors. These factors may have an indirect impact on pre-lockdown remittance capacity by influencing the financial security and household needs of migrants (Collier, Piracha and Randazzo, 2011). The analysis separates whether migrants participated in remittance behavior at all during the pre-return period, as opposed to how much they remitted, by using logistic regression to model this binary decision (Roman, Ileanu and Roman, 2007).

Table 6 Classification Table for Null Model

Classification Table					
	Observed		Predicted		
			Remit 12 months before return		Percentage
			Yes	No	
Step 0	Remit 12 months before return	Yes	224	0	100.0
		No	96	0	.0
	Overall Percentage				

Variables in Null Model

Variables in the Equation							
		β	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(β)
Step 0	Constant	-.847	.122	48.244	1	.000	.429

The omnibus test of model coefficients verified that the addition of explanatory variables greatly enhanced prediction when compared to the null model when all predictors were included in the full model (Block 1) (Chi-square = 325.657, $p < .001$). This indicates that the dependent variable was statistically meaningfully explained by the predictors taken together. The strength of this improvement was further illustrated by the model summary statistics, which showed that the predictors accounted for about 90.5% of the variance in the dependent variable (Cox & Snell R² was 0.639 and the Nagelkerke R² was 0.905). With such high explanatory power, the model appears to fit the data very well.

Table 7 Model Summary Statistics Table

Model Summary			
Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	65.296	.639	.905

The classification table offered more proof of the model's capacity for prediction. The final model achieved an overall accuracy rate of 98.8% by correctly identifying 99.1% of the "Yes" cases and 97.9% of the "No" cases. This result shows how well the predictors included discriminate between the two categories of the dependent variable, which is a significant improvement over the baseline accuracy of 70%. The Hosmer and Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test was statistically significant ($p < .001$), indicating some concerns regarding the model's calibration, even though the performance indicators were excellent. In practice, even if the model's overall predictive strength is high, this could suggest overfitting or that it fits some data subgroups less well.

Table 8 Classification Table for Full Model

Classification Table					
	Observed		Predicted		
			Remit 12 months before return		Percentage Correct
			Yes	No	
Step 1	Remit 12 months before return	Yes	222	2	99.1
		No	2	94	97.9
	Overall Percentage				98.8

Hosmer-Lemeshow Goodness of Fit Test

Hosmer-Lemeshow Test		
Chi-square	df	Sig.
4871240.13	8	.000

When all of the predictors were added to the model at once, a closer look at each one showed that most of them did not significantly contribute. Age, religion, gender, place of residence, and state of origin were among the sociodemographic variables that did not show statistical significance. Similar to this, factors related to migration, including industry, occupation, the main reason for returning, the last place of migration, knowledge of government initiatives, plans for future migration, and post-lockdown remittance patterns, did not reach statistical significance. After controlling for other variables, their estimated coefficients had no significant explanatory value with regard to the dependent variable.

The duration of time spent at the final migration site was the only variable that continuously showed up as significant. This factor had an odds ratio ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.597$) and a negative regression coefficient ($B = -0.516$, $p < .001$). According to this finding, the likelihood of falling into the "No" category dropped by about 40% for every unit increase in length of stay. In other words, those who stayed at their previous migration destination for longer periods of time were less likely to experience the negative outcome category as determined by remit 12 months before return. This demonstrates how longer migration periods can have a stabilizing effect by lowering the chance of negative outcomes upon return. This can be explained by the fact that the economic integration has been enhanced, there has been greater financial security, or even higher personal adaptability abroad.

Table 10 Variables in the Equation of Full Model

Variables	β	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	$\text{Exp}(\beta)$
Age	.019	.050	.151	1	.698	1.019
Religion	-.447	.563	.631	1	.427	.639
Gender	-2.914	4.227	.475	1	.491	.054
State	.627	1.281	.240	1	.624	1.872
Locality	.689	.855	.649	1	.420	1.992
Occupation	-.042	.178	.056	1	.812	.959
Industry of Occupation	.079	.086	.844	1	.358	1.082
Last Location Duration	-.516	.091	31.784	1	.000	.597
Prime Reason for Return	.121	.153	.621	1	.431	1.128
Last Location	-.102	.113	.811	1	.368	.903
Visa Category at the Time of Return	-.018	.942	.000	1	.985	.982
Aware on the SWADES	.410	.772	.282	1	.596	1.507
Future Plan	.221	.262	.709	1	.400	1.247
Remit after Lockdown	.042	.588	.005	1	.943	1.043
Constant	4.192	6.193	.458	1	.499	66.135

The logistic regression result was that, though the model was statistically sound, very accurate and predicted more than 90 percent of the variance, length of stay in the most recent migration destination was the primary determinant of the predictive effect of length of stay. After considering duration, other variables, including demographic and migration-variables, did not have significant independent effects. This means that experiences and re-integration results of the return migrants depend greatly on the period they had in their former migration environment and not on the personal attributes of the migrant or the circumstances surrounding the migration. The findings suggest that the significance of the length of migration experiences as the determinant of the outcomes is critical, and policy frameworks and reintegration efforts must consider length of overseas migration experiences of migrants in particular when developing the support interventions

8. CONCLUSION

Emigrants are a major part of Kerala economy and for the overall development of the state. Migration flows were heavily affected during Covid-19. Among the majority of return emigrants, those who returned due to loss of jobs were the highest in percentage. Therefore, there is a huge responsibility lying with the state to reallocate these human resources into some productive ventures. It is the greatest challenge of the state government. There are several programmes introduced by the state to provide employment and other financial aid to the unemployed return emigrants. Covid-19 brought the concerns and issues of the migrants into limelight. There is a need to highlight the cost of migration and the implication of return migration. The mass return during the pandemic has thrown light on migration from different perspectives. Rehabilitation programmes and the need to strengthen the human resource of return migrants should be the focus of the state in the coming years.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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