

# Emigration, Remittances and Rural Development: A Case of Goa, India

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**Abstract:** Overseas migration of the economically active male population from Goa started during the Portuguese rule to the varied destinations is a remarkable and noteworthy societal phenomenon. This trend continues even in the post-liberation phase of Goa. The present study attempts to analyze the socio-economic and demographic background of the emigrants and destination countries and the activities in which they invest the remittances.

For conducting the study, the authors piloted a field survey in the four villages of Raia, Curtorim, Chandor, and Assolna, distributed in Salcete taluka of the state. The authors used the purposive sampling technique to select the study villages, and a structured questionnaire was prepared and pre-tested to collect responses from 224 emigrant respondents. A descriptive statistical method such as mean and the Fisher's exact test was applied.

The study findings reveal that most emigrant workers from Goa work as seafarers in destination countries, the most famous work destinations being the Middle East and the U.K. as their work destinations. The educational level of emigrants was generally low; they primarily worked in low profile jobs like waiters, room boys, stewards, cooks etc. Most of them migrate abroad through the contact of relatives and friends. However, the core focus of emigration is enhancing their economic and social status. Notwithstanding the vast diversity of investments and savings sources available to them, the construction of houses partakes a significant share of the income earned through remittances.

Key words: Emigration, Seafarer, socio-economic status.

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## Introduction

Migration indicates to growth and development trajectory of a country. It would be prudent to state that International migration, a vital global policy issue, is full of enormous social, economic and cultural implications, especially linked with remittances (Haas, 2007: 6). To be understood and analyzed correctly, it's essential to comprehend mobility dynamics, but geographical studies covering migration profiles are few and sporadic. Of course, several world regions have prepared very few profiles (Olga, 2011:23). Therefore profiling emigrants become an essential component of migration studies. Demographics of emigrants are an integral component of migration studies. It enables us to understand who migrates, where and why? (Sawant, Sapakale and Naik, 2006:30), impacting both places of origin and destination. Therefore, migration leaves significant and lasting effects on the areas of its origin in moulding the social, economic, cultural and demographic attributes of the population (Roy and Debanath, 2011:198)

According to the International Organization for Migration, India has the world's most significant number of emigrants, i.e. 17.5 million. The history of emigration from India goes back

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to the colonial era; Indian migrants are distributed in 199 countries (MEA,2021). More recently, the flow of migrants is towards the Middle East and the USA. Slightly more than half of the Indian emigrants live in Gulf countries (Singh, 2022:1). In 2020 the Indian population in the Anglo-America was 4.2 million; similarly, it is 8.5 million in the Middle East. (MEA,2022). The World Bank estimates place India on the top globally regarding the foreign remittances it receives. In 2020, India received foreign remittances worth \$87 billion (World Bank, 2021).

Thus, remittance is a direct source of foreign exchange earnings to the home countries. Increased income from remittance helps to reduce poverty and indirectly stimulates economic development. The priority of migrants is constructing concrete houses, replacing the traditional stone dwellings. It also allows migrants to overcome market constraints, thereby investing in productive activities and improving their livelihood (Haas, 2010:.229).

#### **Aims and objectives**

In the light of the above statements, the study analyzes the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the emigrants from rural Goa with the following research objectives:-

- a) To examine the spatial distribution of male emigrants from rural areas of Goa,
- b) To analyze their demographic characteristics, and
- c) To assess socio-economic implications of the remittances the migrant earn.

#### **Research Questions**

Based on the above-said objectives, the present paper attempts to answer the following research questions with the help of data mapping and analysis:-

- a) Has the geographical direction of emigration from rural Goa changed over the decades?
- b) What are the drivers for emigration.?
- c) How do the remittances contribute to the quality of life and social status of emigrant households in rural Goa?

#### **Database and methodology**

The migration studies are interdisciplinary by nature, requiring mixed data collection methods. The paper study used primary and secondary data sources both. The primary data used the interview technique through a field survey and a structured questionnaire. The purposive stratified random sampling technique was applied to collect data from two hundred twenty-four overseas working respondents distributed in the four villages, Curtorim, Chandor, Assolna and Raia, of Salcete taluka in Goa state. Only married emigrants with five years of work experience selected primarily belonged to the Christian community.

Before administering the survey in the selected villages, a pilot survey was conducted to gauge the questionnaire's compatibility. The questionnaire had ranking, closed, and a few open-ended questions, broadly divided into (a) demographic, (b) employment, and (c) investments and planning related questions. The collected data was classified, tabulated and then analyzed. The authors used descriptive statistical techniques such as the mean and Fisher's exact test.

## Discussion and Analysis

Historical research indicates that early migration from Goa, which commenced in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century from Salcete and Bardez talukas, was of seamen (Boxer,1969), belonging to the lower castes with little or no educational background after obtaining the essential training to serve as Seafarers. Many Goans worked as ship hands, sailors, stewards and cooks on passengers and cargo ship liners (DeSilva, 2000: 427). Initially, it was a forced migration due to heavy taxation and aspiration to improve quality of life. (D'Souza,1979). The influence of Christianity, Western education and cultural syncretism endowed the Goans with an inclusive identity and facilitated their migration to the Western World (Goa Migration Study,2008). From the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the exodus of Goans overseas became a regular practice (Pinto. 2019). Such a legacy continued in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the post-liberation era of Goa, that is, 1961 onwards. It is purely voluntary for economic enhancement and prosperity, resulting in a remittance economy. Thus, bringing economic growth, social empowerment and cultural development to their families.

A. **Destination and Work Profile:** It is pertinent to understand where these rural males emigrate and what is their background. The early emigrants served as pace-setters. Later, their periodic visits to villages provided opportunities to experience the virtues of the new life, thus producing powerful stimuli to the migration of peers and juniors (Stella,1990: 246). A cursory glance indicates that the legacy that commenced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century still holds good. The Christian Catholic menfolk still work as seafarers. Of the 224 sampled emigrants, 168 (or 70.0 per cent) work on cargo ships and cruise liners as seafarers. Working as seafarers is a matter of pride, and this trend continues (Goa Migration Report, 2008). Therefore, they are popularly known as "Shippies" in Goa.

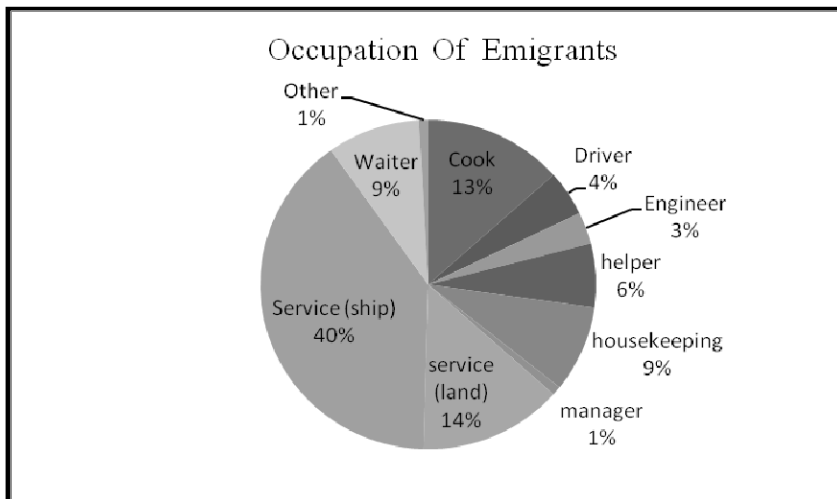
Workplace location	Sub-location	Per cent to total
Sea (70.0 per cent)	Cargo ship	30
	Cruise	64
	Rig	06
Land (30.0 per cent)	Middle East	47
	Asia (except the Middle East)	05
	U.K.	33
	USA	15

Source: Fieldwork, 2019

According to a respondent, *'to work on the cruise provides economic benefits and enough time to spend with family. He works for four to six months as per the contract with a company'*. With the oil boom in the 1970s and economic opportunity in various sectors, many Goans headed toward the Middle East (DeSilva, 2000: 429). The remaining 30 per cent of the emigrants work in different locations of the world; however, the dominance is towards the Middle East countries (Table 1). Recently, there has been an increasing trend of Goans choosing the U.K. as their destination as they hold Portuguese passports, making it more convenient to work in the European

world. Yet another factor that can be attributed is the ease with the language and the desire to earn pounds over Euros (Martins, 2013).

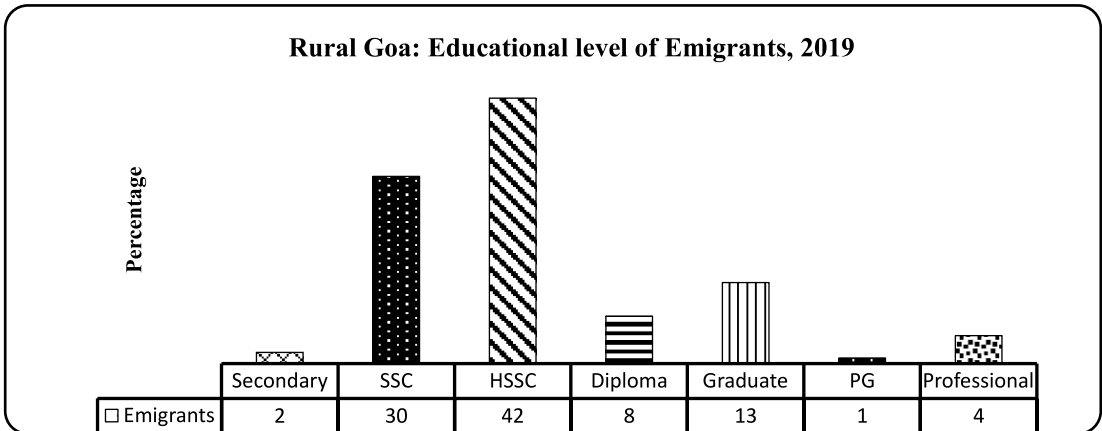
Since most emigrants work on the ship, either on cargo or cruise liners, the job profile remains restricted. Two-fifths of emigrants are service providers, performing multiple tasks; this is more applicable working on the Cargo ship where the staff is limited. Almost 13.0 per cent work as cooks, one-tenth as waiters and an equal number as housekeeping staff (Fig. 2). Only the marginal shares (three per cent and one per cent) work as the engineer and managers. Low education results in low-status work like waiters, room boys, cleaners, helpers, stewards, butlers, and cooks. This applies to both working on the ship or any other destination. An earlier study on Assolna village, Goa, revealed similar results (Sawant, Sapakale and Naik, 2006). However, the positive outcome is their wages are much higher than they achieved in Goa.



**Fig. 1: Occupational classification of emigrants,** Source: Fieldwork, 2019

Education determines the sector of employment and work profile. Almost 35 per cent of emigrants preferred to migrate overseas after finishing their Higher Secondary School (Fig. 3). Since the type of work profile requires a minimum qualification of 10<sup>th</sup> grade pass, usually the trend is to take up a vocational training programme and then work a while in Goa to gain work experience before seeking employment abroad.

Since they don't intend to undertake higher studies, they usually work as chefs, waiters, bartenders, housekeepers etc. Only about one-fifth are graduates, professional degree holders and postgraduates working as mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, accountants and managers. With emigration, there is a potential transfer of skill and knowledge, which stimulates development at the place of origin.

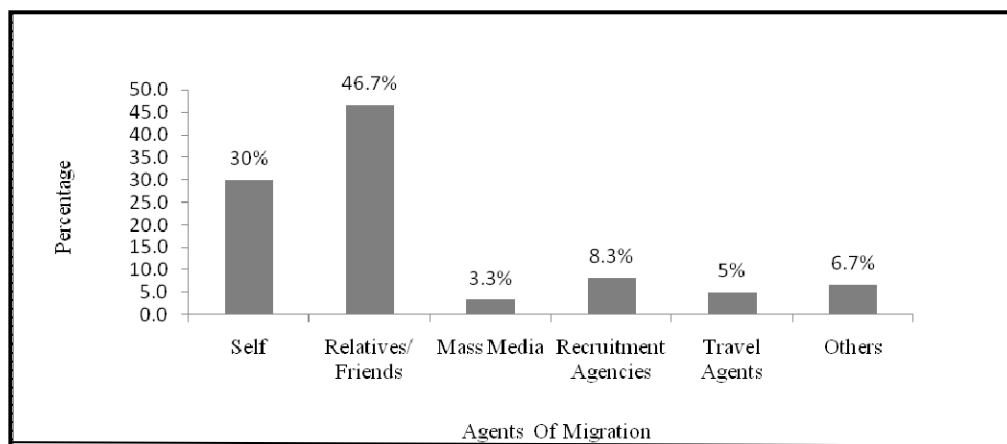


**Fig. 2: Educational Qualification;** *Source: Fieldwork, 2019*

Fisher's exact test was applied to determine the correlation between education and sector of employment. P-value =0.0004998 is less than  $\alpha=0.05$  at a 5.0 level of significance, indicating that the two variables are dependent. Most emigrants have completed twelfth-grade education followed by a professional diploma in related employment sectors like A.C. servicing, front office, culinary, etc.

**B.Modus Operandi to emigrate:** Personal contacts and references are the two main channels that enable one to seek employment overseas. Another medium is newspaper advertisements and recruitment agencies.

Relatives and friends play the pivot role in facilitating the emigration process, much attributed to the legacy of emigration of the Goan folks (Fig. 3). Their inspiration and support encourage juniors and peers to migrate abroad. As correctly said by one of the respondents stated, *"I always wanted to work on the ship as my father worked overseas which ensured comfort and quality of life to family. This couldn't have been possible working in Goa"*. Obviously, even today, most youth dream of migrating abroad, and economic factors are the key motivator. Therefore several institutions have been set up to offer diploma/vocational courses in hotel management, catering, bakery, ship management, electronics etc., to these youngsters and later help in recruitments on ship or land.



**Fig 3: Rural Goa: Modes of Emigration** *Source: Fieldwork, 2019*

Less than one-tenth (8.3 per cent) of emigrants departed overseas directly through recruitment agencies, and another more than one-twentieth (6.7 per cent) secured jobs through overseas employment exchange. While travel agencies and mass media also act as the leading agencies in offering the job to the youth. Newspaper advertisements, Magazines, and internet-based sites are the medium through which one can migrate abroad/ overseas. Therefore, it has become a norm to migrate abroad/overseas to overcome family problems, live a life full of comfort, learn new skills, and earn a higher income. Therefore, economically and socially satisfying needs of the families in their home countries.

**C. Drivers of Emigration:** More than two-fifths (46.0 per cent) of migrants were employed, and the majority (53.0 per cent) were unemployed before going abroad. They migrated overseas due to dissatisfaction with the job in Goa, the low salary level, a desire to live a better quality of life and so on. Based on the research, the ranking was done (Table 2). High income and better employment in the destination country are most emigrants' priorities. It enhances their standard of living and socio-economic status at their place of origin (Fernandes, 2008:1). The families feel proud when the household members work abroad. It helps to bring economic prosperity to the family. Thus the status of the family is represented by their houses, education of children, clothing and participation in village celebrations (Sawant and Rebello, 2017: 66). Another priority that drives the migrant to migrate is savings which stand at fourth rank as migrants want to acquire more money to satisfy the future needs of their families. Many of them take loans to migrate abroad or construct a house. Therefore repaying the debts and savings is yet another priority for migration. Another reason to relocate overseas is to be exposed to different advanced technologies, cultures and languages.

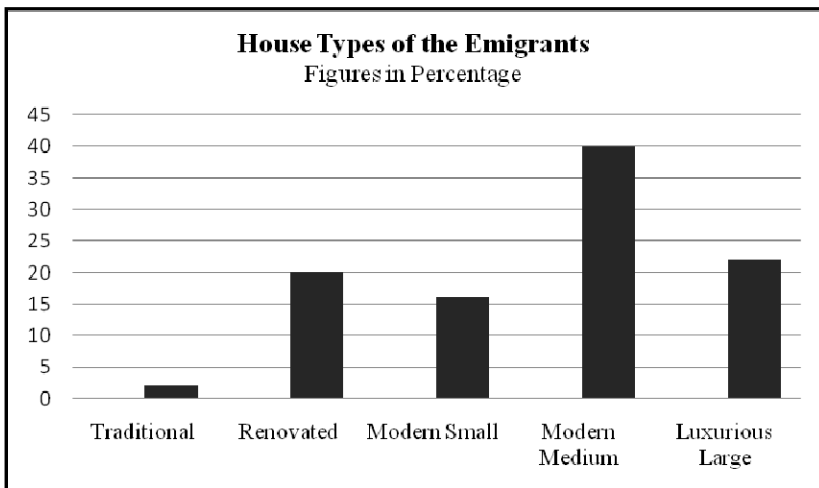
### **Implications of emigration**

The mean age of marriage of emigrants is 30 years; marrying between 24 to 40 years of age. Most migrants prefer to migrate after completing their high/higher Secondary School education and then financially stabilize. Usually, they plan to settle down with all the necessary amenities like a bungalow, car, landed property and good financial back-up, impacting their age at marriage.

Migration Reasons	Rank	Migration Reasons	Rank
High Income-Better Employment	1	Skill learning-future prospects	4
Better life Quality-Peer Pressure	2	Permanent nationality	5
Indebtedness	3	Other factors	6

Source: Fieldwork, 2019

The ramifications of emigration are multiple, positive as well as harmful. Emigration has also led to the emergence of the remittance economy. Remittance has enabled the emigrants' families to have a better standard of living (Zachariah and Rajan, 2009). A sizeable part of the earnings is spent on luxurious living and providing better education to the children. Most emigrant families use their savings to invest in an apartment or construct a house. Others have invested their savings in purchasing property and other businesses (Stella, 2000). In the present study, house type has been considered to show enhanced lifestyle and quality of life that is ensured due to emigration. The Goans invest a considerable amount of their earnings in constructing houses, a visible symbol of status.



**Fig. 4: Rural Goa: Categorization of Emigrants' Houses by available facilities**

*Source: Field Work, 2019*

The classification of houses was done based on parameters like gardens, swimming pools, parking areas, balconies, rooms, halls and storerooms. The houses are divided into five categories: (a) The luxurious bungalows, designed gardens, swimming pool, spacious parking lots, three balconies, five rooms, huge halls, and storerooms, (b) The medium modern houses consisting of small gardens, small parking lots, two balconies, and halls with four rooms, (c) The small modern house having a small hall, three rooms, and one balcony, (d) Renovated traditional houses consisting of small halls, two rooms, a storeroom and a backyard, and (e) The traditional houses having small halls, at least two rooms, a small storeroom and a backyard. Thus, most emigrants (nearly 62.0 per cent) have medium modern to big luxurious houses as they spend the bulk of their earnings on constructing such houses. Thus it shows a high standard of living among emigrants. It

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would be prudent to state that the rural landscape of Salcete taluka is changing with the mushrooming of colourful exotic independent houses in these villages.

#### Investments and Savings

As discussed earlier, house types represent the status symbol enhancing their societal position. Hence, a significant investment in constructing the house and household amenities (Table 3). More than one-third of emigrants invest in purchasing the landed properties, preferably plots, and act as brokers, thereby doing a profitable business.

Investment and Savings Type	Per cent	Investment and Savings Type	Per cent
House construction and related assets	41.67	Savings & Investments ( LIC/FDs)	15.00
Land purchase (Plots)	35.00	Total	100
Commercial property (shops etc)	8.33	Source: Fieldwork, 2019	

The savings are in the form of monetary funds, LICs, insurance and bank deposits account for 15 per cent. One respondent stated, "Earlier, *my parents used to invest significantly in fixed deposits, but since the interest rates are negligible, it's better to invest in property.* A few of the emigrants spent buying a commercial property to start their business when they return or presently rent it out.

#### Conclusion

Gradually, the Goan economy has transformed from primary to tertiary services under the impact of the overseas migration legacy. Initially, migration remaining forced slowly changed to economic transformation and the creation of assets. The topology of emigrant reveals that migrant migrates to the west in the 25–30 bracket, the prime age group. Most of the emigrants are seafarers, while others work at significant destinations in Middle Eastern countries like Kuwait, Dubai, Oman, Saudi Arabia etc. Nowadays, they prefer to migrate to Australia, the United Kingdom and America for better prospects and enhance their status. Secondly, due to low education qualifications, the migrants are forced to take up low-status jobs, and most of the migrants work as waiters, room boys, stewards, cooks, etc.

In contrast, a small minority work in service sectors and professional jobs. Most of them migrate abroad through the contact of relatives and friends. Others migrate through recruitment agencies, travel agencies and mass media.

Most of the emigrants secure education till HSSC and procure a diploma course. Hence, educational levels decide the employment and payments, along with years of experience in the particular employment sector. Emigrants obtained higher housekeeping skills while working as cooks, stewards, butlers, room boys etc.

The emigrant workers prioritized the modernization of their houses, followed by celebrations, participation in youth clubs, etc. In addition, they contribute some amount to charity



and investments. Due to the rise in the standard of living, emigrants spend on constructing houses and purchasing land. Most emigrants prefer to send their children to work abroad or overseas to continue the trend of migration and enhance their lives.

Based on the present research, there needs to be a focus on higher education and procurement of professional degree/s, enabling the rustics to secure better employability and even diverse employment destinations. Greater emphasis must be on financial savings and investments—the present trend is more on showcasing status through tangible products.

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