

IIPS Research Brief

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INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION FROM GUJARAT: THE MAGNITUDE, PROCESS AND IMPACT

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Background

The emigration from India to the West, although started after the Second World War, accelerated hugely after 1965 as a result of the liberalization of immigration policy of US and other western countries. It is believed that Gujaratis migrated abroad to work as traders, businessmen, shopkeepers, hoteliers, professionals etc. A comprehensive study of Gujarati emigration which includes the characteristics of emigrants, the individual and household strategies, the process of migration comprising of formal (recruitment agency) and informal channels (family, kin, friends, religious groups and NGOs), costs and financing of migration, the contact, visits and remittances sent by the emigrants to their native households would be helpful in understanding the causes and consequences of migration from Gujarat. This study makes an attempt to study Gujarati emigration in the recent past. It estimates the level of emigration, the characteristics and process of emigration, decision making, remittances sent and utilized. It also assessed the impact of emigration at the household and community levels. The main objectives of the study are as follows:

Objectives:

- 1) To estimate the level of emigration from and return migration to Gujarat.
- 2) To study the characteristics of emigrant and non-emigrant households in Gujarat.
- 3) To study the role of the individual and household factors in the decision making and process of migration.
- 4) To study the magnitude of remittances, its utilization and impact on the individual, household and community levels.

Data and Methods:

Primary data were collected through interview schedules pertaining to a sample of 10,000 households selected through stratified random sampling. A total of 200 PSUs i.e 120 rural and 80 urban were selected covering the entire state of Gujarat. First Gujarat was divided into four regions and villages and towns falling in each region were selected based on PPS method according to the share of each region and rural-urban proportions. From each PSUs, 50 households were selected randomly after mapping and listing of the households in the selected PSUs. The survey results were suitably weighted as sampling units differed in size and were selected with varying probabilities. The survey was conducted in 2012 and covered 9714 households.

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This study covers not only emigration but return migrants as well. Wherever head of the household reported to have return migrants from abroad, he/she was interviewed along with the head of household. Thus the study was able to capture information about the place of destination as well. Apart from emigration, as the state of Gujarat is known for in-migration, data on internal migrants were also collected and analysed.

Household Characteristics:

The present study collected information on various aspects of household and household amenities. About one tenth (10.1%) of rural households still use unprotected dug well for drinking water. The rural areas also have a very poor access to toilet facility with more than half (53.1%) of the households use open spaces and another 9.8 percent households have pit latrines. Wood (71.7%) is the major source of cooking fuel in rural areas followed by LPG (25.1%). The important household possessions in rural areas are mobile phone (88.8%), TV (57.2%), motor cycle/scooter (35.8%), LPG gas (32.0%), VCD/DVD (23.9%) and refrigerator (21.6%). A little less than two third (65.5%) of the rural households have a bank/post office account while the corresponding figure for urban areas is 82.5 %. Only 8.2 % of the rural households and 5.6 % of the urban households are covered under micro finance. Among the rural households, a little more than one third (37.1%) have BPL cards.

Emigration:

An emigrant is defined as a former member of a household, who left the household any time in the past for staying outside India provided he/she, was alive on the date of survey. This is a NSSO definition and we have followed the same definition in this study. In 2007-08, the emigration rate from Gujarat was 3 per 1000 population compared to 4 per 1000 at all India level.

The present survey gives an emigration rate of 8 per 1000 population. Similarly in terms of proportion of households, it was observed that there were 11 households with emigrants per 1000 households in 2007-08 which increased to 27 households per 1000 households in this survey. Therefore, some increase in emigration has taken place during 2007-2012 from Gujarat. This study further shows that emigration in recent years has increased more from areas of Saurashtra and Kutch compared to Central Plain (also called Northern Plains in NSSO Survey) known for emigration and diasporas in the past. The South-eastern Gujarat which comprises districts with sizeable presence of tribal is having the least emigration. The recent emigration from Gujarat is neither business related nor entrepreneurial as we expected, but very similar to unskilled and skilled (including professional) labour migration taking place from other states like Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Further emigration is predominantly a male selective phenomenon. The SCs, STs and OBCs are much less emigrating compared to higher castes (others). About one-tenth of the emigrants were students and similar magnitudes were also reported having the status of housewives. Emigration was predominantly from two communities namely Patels and Muslims. It is also important to note that majority of the emigrants were from rural areas that shows the rising aspiration to migrate due to lack of better opportunities locally.

The average cost of legal emigration was about 2.5 lakh. Money was mobilized through parental, personal and family sources and the contribution of formal channels like banks or sponsorship by Government /other sources was not significant. This further supports the proposition that emigration is an informal process primarily driven by individual and supported by the network of family and friends. Emigration from Gujarat has been taking place mainly to developed countries like US (36 %) followed by Australia (11 %) and UK (8%). However one-fourth of emigrants also moved to Middle-East.

Gujarat is a state also known for in-migration. Most of the in-migration in Gujarat was from within the state . About one-third of the internal migrants moved from other states of the country. This study also tried to probe if internal migration is related to international migration. This could be possible if people move by step. However, we did not find much support to this conjecture. At household level less than 10 % emigrant households reported that their members moved internally before venturing abroad. Internal migrants come from lower socio-economic background compared to emigrants originating from economically better off households. It seems that both types of migration are influenced by different migration influencing factors.

Return Migration:

One of the consequences of emigration on the place of origin could be accessed through the role of return emigrants. The total number of return emigrants in the surveyed households was 111 of which 37.0 % belonged to Kuchh followed by Saurashtra (23.4%), Northern Plains (20.7%) and South Eastern Gujrat (18.9%). The average return emigration was 11 per 1000 household or 2 per 1000 population for Gujarat as whole.

The majority of the return emigrants were males (92 %) and currently married (75 %) at the time of emigration. Most of the currently married return emigrants did not take their spouse along with them. The main reason for not taking spouse was too much responsibility back home and inadequate income at the place of destination. Maximum numbers of return emigrants (33.3%) were self employed followed by wage labour (23 %) after return. About one-tenth have been working as regular worker in private sector compared to just one percent employed in government jobs after returning to Gujarat. About one-tenth have been searching jobs after their return. The educational attainment of return emigrants shows that the highest proportion (29.8%) have middle but below higher secondary education followed by literate but below middle (29.7%) and graduate and higher level of education (22.5%). The most important reasons for return to home were the expiry of employment contract (30.2 %) followed by conditions at home required them to return (19 per cent), insufficient income (7 per cent), health and injury (6 per cent) and illegal stay and repatriation (4 %).

Figure 1: Percentage of households received remittances during last 12 months by amount (in Rupees)

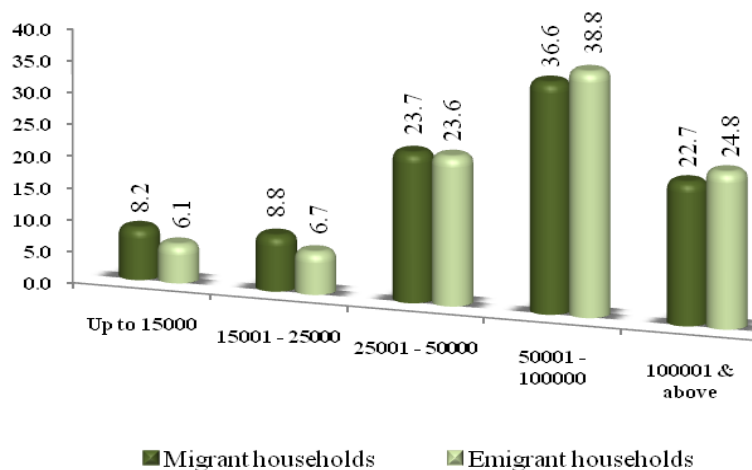
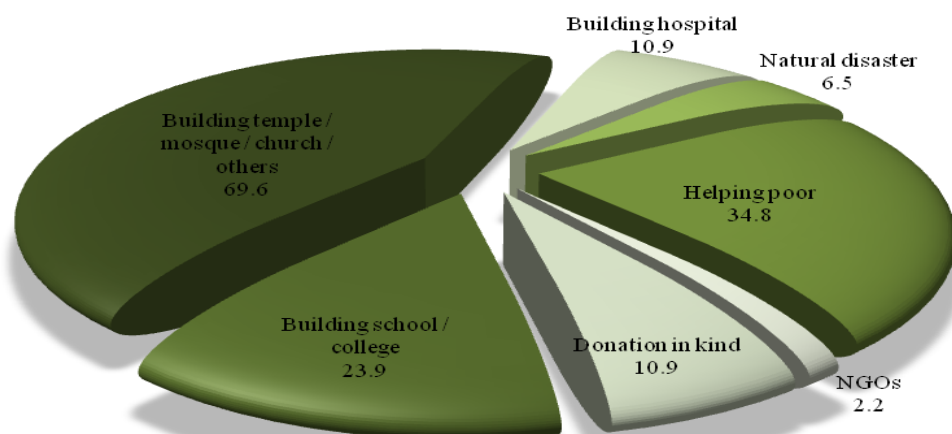


Figure 2: Percentage of those emigrants who donated money by purpose of donation



The return emigrants reported three main source of information for their emigration namely agents and brokers (27.4%) followed by relatives (26.4%) and friends (21.7%). The most important skills acquired by the return emigrants abroad were accounting (42.5%), technical skills (40.6%), marketing/trading skills (27.4%), managerial/supervisory (25.5%), leadership/organizational skills (24.5%) and navigation skills (23.6%). About one-fourth of return emigrant also said that they would like to re-emigrate again.

Consequences of Emigration:

Emigration brings about lots of changes at the individual, household and community levels. There are social, economic as well as demographic changes due to emigration both at the origin and destination places. The most important outcome of emigration is the remittances which influence the process of development, brings changes in the consumption pattern and life style of the individual and households especially at the place of origin. Majority of the emigrant households reported (64.0 %) to have received remittances. The frequency of receiving remittances was not regular as only one-fifth of the emigrant households received on monthly basis.

The mean annual amount of remittances received by the emigrant households was rupees 1.3 lakh and about a quarter of them reported to have received remittances above rupees 1lakh during the past one year (see Figure 1). About four-fifth of households reported that the mode of transfer of remittances to their family members was through bank while less than one tenth reported transferring remittances through relatives and friends. A majority (88.6 %) of the households use remittances for household consumption followed by payment towards utility bills (77.7 %), medical and health expenses (60.8 %), education of children (48.2 %) and repayment of debts (42.8 %). Of the total households who use remittances on household consumption, about three-fourth belong to rural locality. In case of the use of remittances on education of children, health care expenses, payment of utility bills and repayment of debts the majority of households belonged to rural locality.

One-fourth also donated for building educational institutions like schools and colleges. More than half of them sent donation through the channel of family members, and about two-fifth sent money directly to the organizations. Emigration has huge impact on both the place of origin and the place of destination. Information about the impact of emigration on individual life style, family and society is collected from the head of household with at least an emigrant. More than four-fifth of the respondents reported that due to emigration, there is an increase in the economic and social status of the family. Similarly they belonged to higher castes followed by OBCs. An assessment of the emigrant households by Standard of Living and Wealth Index (SLWI) shows that majority of those reported improvement in their social and economic status due to emigration belonged to higher SLWI.

Emigration also increases the expenditure on consumption (36 %) as well as increases the savings and investment (26 %). The answer to the question whether emigration brings changes in the adoption of life style, 39.0 % of emigrant households reported that emigration has an impact on dressing and socializing of the family members followed by the impact on communication and languages (38 %). Emigration also brought changes in the food habits of the household members. More than one fourth (29 %) of the respondents reported that emigration brought changes in the eating habits of the household members followed by one-fifth (20 %) of the respondents reporting people are eating more fast food due to emigration. Information was also gathered on impact of emigration on values and attitudes of the individuals. Three-fifth (60 %) of the emigrant households reported that due to emigration, there was an increased attachment to family and home followed by 33 % reporting greater sense of national and community pride, while 24 % reported increased preference for gender equality. Emigration not only brought changes at the individual and family levels, but also for the community at large. It has also increased the aspiration of emigration among large sections of society.

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