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## Introduction

The year 2020 saw one of the biggest health crises in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic. The repercussions induced by the pandemic still persist, and the long-term impact on health for those who were inflicted by the virus is yet to be fully understood. Approximately more than 600 million cases of COVID-19 had been reported globally and more than six million people have died as of October 2022, (World Health Organization, 2022). The pandemic also gravely affected the economic growth of almost all countries and was also the reason for major mobility restrictions all over the world. Mobility forms the crux of a migrant's life. Most migrants decide to move away from home for better employment and living conditions. Although COVID-19 had a devastating impact on almost everyone in one way or another, migrant populations were found to be particularly vulnerable.

The migrant experience of educated and highly skilled migrants drastically differs from those who migrate to be employed in informal sectors and those who are low or medium-skilled (Rather and Yousuf, 2020; Rajan and Saxena, 2019). The challenges and vulnerabilities faced by these groups can vastly differ beginning from their context of migration including motivations to migrate, economic and education status to the post-migration life. Migrants cannot be understood as a homogenous group but rather as diverse individuals with different aims and aspirations for whom mobility is of significant importance. This paper aims to understand the migration journey of the “distressed” migrant returnees, who had to come back due to a crisis or setback in the destination country due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Rajan and Arokkiaraj, 2022; Rajan and Pattath, 2022a).

The 281 million international migrants worldwide in 2020 reflect the fact that migration is increasingly seen as a gateway of opportunities and new possibilities, especially for individuals from precarious living conditions in their origin country (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021). We live in a world where free movement and accessibility are the promises of the near future encouraged by rapid globalization and the emergence of a global village. However, these seem to remain promises as illustrated by recent migration policies adopted post-COVID-19. Indian migrants working in large tech firms like Twitter, Meta and Amazon were severely affected by the recent layoffs in the United States as part of the ongoing recession (BBC News, 2022). While the new United Kingdom prime minister is scrutinizing the admissions of foreign students enrolling in “low-quality” degrees (The Guardian, 2022). This move comes after the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported that for the first time, Indian students have overtaken Chinese international students in the United Kingdom (ONS, 2023). The post-COVID-19 migration policies of the West, especially the much sought-after destination countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, show a tightening of migration policies placing restrictions on the inflow of migrants.

Structural issues ingrained in migration and the institutional bias towards migrants from regions of the Global South is evident when considering that nationals from countries with very high levels of human development, mostly that of the Global North can travel visa-free to around 85 per cent of all other countries. In contrast, visa restrictions for countries with very low levels of human development indicate that irregular pathways are the most likely option available for those belonging to countries that fall below the developed section (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021).

Immigration to the Global North for a better life is not as easy as it was in the past. Even for those who did manage to migrate, they have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The large-scale return of migrants during the pandemic also served as a wake-up call to governments around the world of the likelihood of migrants' return to their country of origin given the increasing limitations of permanent residency in destination countries. This holds

especially true for developing countries such as India with a massive share of nearly 18 million of its population residing outside its boundaries (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021). International and internal migrants are integral to India's economy. The latter is larger in number and the different facets of internal migration are drastically different from international migration (Dhar and Bhagat, 2021). Internal migrants form the backbone of the informal sector of India and over the years they have formed strong migration corridors within the country (Ibid.).

This paper looks into the impact of COVID-19 on international and internal Indian migrants and the specifics regarding their return. The first section delves into the concept of return migration and also looks at the limited discourse on returnees to India. The second section elaborates on the various vulnerabilities of migrants that were magnified due to the pandemic and how migrants from a developing country like India are disproportionately affected during such a crisis leading up to their return to their home country or their villages, in the case of internal migrants. The third and fourth sections focus on the various programmes and policies available as part of the reintegration process in India and their respective impact on migration governance. Although the paper focuses on the conditions of Indian migrants, it is most definitely a reflection of the realities of migration journeys in similar developing countries in South Asia (Rajan, 2023).

## Return migration

The return migration of “distressed returnees” discussed in this paper is theorized by Battistella (2018) as “return of setback” caused by a combination of voluntary and forced returns because of troubles such as unemployment, family responsibility and dissatisfaction, as well as “return of crisis” which is a result of a crisis in the place of destination. Outside the context of crisis, the return of migrants can also be associated with the temporary nature of migration observed in many destination countries. Most of India's migrants are working in the Gulf in low-skilled occupations with temporary working permits (Jain and Oommen, 2016; Rajan and Oommen, 2020). This guarantees the destination country a definite return of the migrants in the later stage of their migration journey (Collier et al., 2011). Being heavily remittance dependent, these returnees impact the economic stability of migrants' families in the country of origin. This sparks possibilities of remigration among the returnees, thereby, making the return migration just a phase and not the end of their migration journey (Rajan and Pattath, 2022a). Apart from family, migrant's decision-making are also heavily influenced by other factors such as their skill sets, economic conditions, gender and experiences in the destination country.

The experiences of women returnees vary drastically from that of their men counterparts. Women reportedly face more challenges in sustainable reintegration such as access to employment opportunities, and health-care services and face various forms of abuse (Paasche and Skilbrei, 2017). Women who migrate through irregular channels due to reasons such as lack of documentation and pressure from the community find it difficult to plan their return home and are often vulnerable to exploitation (UN-Women, 2017; Arokkiaraj and Rajan, 2021). Similarly, there is a difference in the return experience of a distressed migrant who does not anticipate the return and was compelled to do so due to difficult circumstances when compared to an individual who was prepared to make their journey back home (Bhatt and Roberts, 2012). To ensure the successful reintegration of these varied groups, the reintegration models should cater to the different needs of such groups. Looking at returnees not just as possible economic resources but in terms of a humanistic perspective, actions taken for reintegration should include other important elements such as their psychological and social well-being.

Studies on reintegration and return migration to India are limited in terms of exploring specific issues pertaining to return migration and it is also concentrated in historically relevant migrant-sending states such as Kerala and Punjab whereas the emigration clearance data shows that

the North Indian states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and West Bengal currently account for more than 50 per cent of the emigration clearances to Gulf countries (Reserve Bank of India, 2022). Most of the current analysis on migrants and their return is done using the data using the National Sample Survey which essentially helps in examining characteristics of the migrants and is not necessarily sufficient to make effective predictions or policies. In this respect, the Kerala Migration Survey (KMS), which extensively covers the various nuances related to migrants, the conditions of the migrant household in the home country and their return, has been of significant help to the Kerala government in the planning and implementation of many of its programmes.<sup>1</sup>

## Vulnerabilities of migrants during COVID-19

Observed to have been in the most vulnerable or “at risk” category, migrants both within India and outside its boundaries faced the brunt of the complete lockdowns and more importantly, stringent rules that were imposed in a land that was not their home. Unlike the very small percentage of highly skilled migrants employed in secure and formal employment, the majority of migrants from India feature at a lower rung on the skill ladder. They were the ones who were predominantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in terms of:

- (1) **Health challenges:** Physical distancing was the golden rule implemented at the onset of the pandemic to decrease the spread of the virus. But those confined to congested spaces that served as accommodation for migrants did not allow for such physical distancing (Rajan, 2022). The crowded dormitories of construction workers in Saudi Arabia, for example, resulted in migrants being 75 per cent of the total population that tested positive for COVID-19 as of May 2020 (Ministry of Health Saudi Arabia, 2020). When they contracted the virus, these migrants had difficulty accessing the formal healthcare system in the destination country (Khan and Arokkiaraj, 2021). Moreover, an increase in xenophobia during the inception of the pandemic, wherein migrants were scapegoated as virus spreaders, severely impacted the psychological health of the migrants. This was even more pronounced for Asian migrants who tended to be associated with the origin of the virus in China, leading to anti-Asian attitudes, including through terms like ‘Wuhan virus’ being used by prominent leaders of the world (Reny and Barreto, 2022).
- (2) **Economic challenges:** The lockdowns and the new norms that were imposed due to the pandemic, such as remote working, did not extend to low-skilled workers. The lockdowns resulted in the loss of jobs and lack of employment opportunities, raising issues for migrants to sustain their families back in the country of their origin. The economic crisis that was induced by the pandemic severely disrupted the economies of countries across the globe. Many migrants reported loss of wages or non-payment of wages (Khan and Arokkiaraj, 2021; Rajan and Akhil, 2022). The informal status of their employment and the lack of redressal mechanisms available in the destination country meant that most wage-related issues did not receive a concrete solution (Rajan and Pattath, 2022b). Although India initiated Vande Bharath Mission to bring back migrants stuck abroad, the returnees had to suffer the brunt of expensive flight charges while they were already facing severe economic challenges due to the pandemic (Abella and Sasikumar, 2020).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> KMS is a large-scale secondary database on migration from Kerala (both international and internal to the other states of India) conducted by the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) and International Institute for Migration and Development, coordinated by S. Irudaya Rajan and K.C. Zachariah, since 1998 and completed eight rounds and the ninth round just begun in 2023. The Kerala model of migration surveys are already replicated in the following states: Punjab, Gujarat, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand and Odisha.

<sup>2</sup> Vande Bharath mission was a civilian evacuation exercise of India to bring back Indian citizens stranded abroad during the lockdown in 2020 due to COVID-19.

- (3) **Mobility challenges:** The COVID-19 database of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees noted that at the peak of the pandemic, 168 countries fully or partially closed their borders, 27 countries returned asylum-seekers to their country of origin and 31 countries sought to derogate from their treaty-based human rights obligations. The rise of far-right political parties and anti-migrant sentiment, especially in destination countries has further intensified the mobility crisis experienced by the migrants during the pandemic (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021). Many States used the COVID-19 pandemic to further extend their migration deterrence policies. A case in point is the plans made by the South African authorities to build a 40 kilometres fence along the border shared with Zimbabwe citing the prevention of undocumented migrants from spreading health risks (Aljazeera, 2020). As from March 2020, Title 42 (which is now terminated) was widely used by the Trump administration to override the immigration law of providing asylum to irregular entrants in the pretext of health risks during COVID-19 (*The Guardian*, 2023). Mobility limitations disproportionately affected the lives of migrants, whether they were planning to migrate or were living in destination countries. Even within India the lives of about 600 million internal migrants came to a standstill with no employment or any source of livelihood due to the severe lockdown measures (Rajan and Bhagat, 2021; Rajan et al., 2020). About 600,000 to 800,000 migrants left the city of Mumbai on foot, by trucks or relying on special service trains in the early months of the lockdown (Saldanha, 2021). Most of these migrants suffered from heatstrokes and other health challenges and tragic stories of their return journey during the pandemic remain a dark chapter of the COVID-19 crisis.

Most of these challenges are not unique to COVID-19 but are rather a regular part of a migrant's life. The only difference is that these challenges further intensified the vulnerabilities of the migrants during the pandemic. Upon their return, migrants reported unhygienic quarantine facilities and increased instances of discrimination by communities back home as migrants were considered as the potential carriers of the virus and, thus, "at risk" individuals (Rather and Yousuf, 2020). Isolated living conditions and feelings of alienation in their home country added to the psychological challenges of returnees. Returnees were also faced with further challenges related to their economic conditions. A significant contribution to India's GDP comes from remittances and the decrease in remittances naturally trickled down to the rural economies of the country which depend on a large number of international low and semi-skilled migrants (International Labour Organization, 2020). Having left in the first place due to unfavourable socioeconomic conditions in the home country that are largely structural in nature, returnees found it hard to find means of sustenance upon their return (Mohamed and Abdul, 2020). India is yet to achieve structural transformation given the increasing income inequality, unemployment and demographic dividend (Thakur, 2020). Most of the migrant sending countries, such as India, rank high in population density and their labour markets are not capable of absorbing returnees, who are mostly low to semi-skilled (ibid.). This made the economic reintegration of returnees at the time of a global health crisis a serious challenge for the Government of India.

With nearly 18 million Indians living abroad in 2020 (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021), India saw an unprecedented increase in the number of returnees during the pandemic. Nearly 4 million overseas Indians were reported to be brought back by the Vande Bharath Mission by December 2020 (Rajan and Arokkiaraj, 2022). The number of international migrants from India varies drastically from region to region. About 89 per cent of Kerala's international migrants reside in six countries in the Gulf (Rajan and Zachariah, 2019). These countries do not allow for permanent residency heightening the vulnerabilities faced by migrants in the destination country at the time of a crisis. For instance, as of 2022, there were 118,095 permanent residents of Indian descent in Canada, up from 32,828 in 2013 and the 2021 Canada census revealed 520,000 residents in the country spoke Punjabi (Government of Canada, 2022). The diverse set of international migrants from the very same country face widely different problems, and can only be addressed both by

destination as well as the country of origin if they possess a comprehensive understanding of the nature of their migration. The KMS is one step forward towards understanding the nuances of migration from the state of Kerala with a deep focus on migrant households, but such integral and systematic efforts are yet to be initiated by other large sending states in India. The KMS data was used by the Government of Kerala to determine the requirements for hospital beds and quarantine facilities even before the Vande Bharat Mission began.<sup>3</sup>

Similar to most South and South-east Asian countries, India also is a developing country that heavily relies on remittances as an important component of its GDP (Lubambu, 2014). Economies like India derive major strength from remittances and such countries must ensure that a sizeable investment is made towards sustaining these economic arrangements (remittance via migration) and improve the institutional support to facilitate efficient migration to destination countries (Barbora et al., 2008). Although bilateral labour agreements, memorandum of understanding and migration policies support migration from India to some destination countries, the phase of return migration is absent from policies and programmes designed for migrants. This omission can be attributed to the larger problem of lack of discourse on return migration as, unlike migration that promises remittance, the return of these migrants is necessarily not framed as beneficial for the origin country. This especially holds for countries like India wherein migration in the first place is due to the lack of economic opportunities in the country. Many of these migrants experienced wage theft and felt a lack of protection from the government and the employers in the destination country (Foley and Piper, 2021). Although most of them acknowledge the positive role played by various civil society organizations, they reported ineffective reintegration measures in their home country as a hurdle upon their return (Khan and Arokkiaraj, 2021; Rajan and Arokkiaraj, 2022).

## The case of Kerala

The KMS 2018 records about 2.1 million emigrants living abroad among which almost 90 per cent are working in the Gulf countries. This migration corridor that was formed over the years is a major source of economic support to the Kerala government. Remittances from the Gulf are vital for sustaining many families in Kerala (Rajan and Zachariah, 2019). The number of returnees to Kerala between May 2020 and April 2021 was estimated to be 1.43 million and most of these returnees reported loss of job, pay or other distress as the reason for return (Rajan and Pattath, 2022b; Rajan and Akhil, 2022). The Non-Resident Keralite Affairs (NORKA), launched in 1996 by the Kerala government to ensure the welfare of migrants, has been increasingly used as a platform to help and guide returnees. Apart from the existing NORKA rehabilitation programmes such as *Santhwana*, new schemes such as the *Pravasi Bhadratha – PEARL* and *Pravasi Bhadratha – MEGA*, were also initiated to financially aid the returnees at the time of COVID-19. Despite Kerala having one of the oldest and most comprehensive systems of management of international migrants in the country, the effectiveness of these schemes is yet to be fully explored. The Return Emigrant Survey conducted among 1,985 returnees to Kerala observed that almost 84 per cent of the returnees were unaware of the schemes being available (Rajan and Pattath, 2022b). The study also noted that 50 per cent of the returnees wanted to re-emigrate for better employment opportunities. This further reiterates the importance of effective and innovative models for return migrants, not only in terms of reintegration but also re-emigration and the need for adequate monitoring and analysis of the implementation of current schemes.

<sup>3</sup> The writer of this series is one of the members of the expert committee to advise the Government of Kerala during COVID-19 wave I.



## Reintegration measures

COVID-19 and the economic crisis that ensued led to the return journey of millions of migrants to their villages. The large crowds and images of migrants walking hundreds of kilometres to reach back to their villages due to lack of transportation portrayed the migrant crisis existing within India. The magnitude of the problem resulted in few immediate government interventions and relief packages and programmes for the internal return migrants. This included:

- The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan, Rs. 50,000 crores (USD 6.3 billion), to facilitate the employment of migrant workers who have gone back to their home state.
- Aatm Nirbhar Bharat: On May 2020, the Prime Minister of India announced economic packages of Twenty lakh crore (USD 268.74 billion) to create employment opportunities, for workers of the unorganized sector including migrant workers, strengthening the micro, small and medium enterprises sector and promoting the rural economy.
- State migrant cell: Migrant workers' cell was created to prepare a database of migrant workers in every state.
- Ministry of Labour and Employment instructed all state governments to provide financial assistance to construction workers from Building and Other Construction Workers' Cess Fund. About two crore migrant workers have been provided Rs. 5000 crores (USD 650 million) directly in their bank accounts by various states.

Additionally, the ministry launched the e-SHRAM portal, a national database of unorganized workers in 2021 and plans to link it with Aadhaar to facilitate the delivery of social security and welfare schemes to such workers (Rajput and Rajan, 2023). Looking at schemes and programmes introduced prior to the pandemic, the one nation one ration card programme is one of the swiftly implemented schemes of the Indian Government starting in 2019, covering almost 80 crore beneficiaries and proved useful during the time of COVID-19, especially for migrants, ensuring subsidized food grains. Although the programme suffers from exclusion errors, it surely challenges the prior limitations of such schemes that were formerly domicile based. Migrants in cities like Mumbai and Delhi often reside in slums or unauthorized settlements to save on rental expenses. Such informal settings lack basic hygienic conditions like sanitation facilities or safe drinking water. To support these migrants, the affordable rental housing complexes initiated by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs aids migrants in urban spaces to access dignified rental housing close to their workplaces.

Although reintegration schemes did exist prior to COVID-19, they did not receive much popular attention or focus until there was a glaring migrant crisis in 2020. Post-COVID-19, there has been an effort to create a national database, which was long overdue. As of March 2022, more than 24.98 crore unorganized workers, mostly constituting of internal migrants have been registered on the e-SHRAM portal. The Labour and Employment Minister of India informed the Parliament in September 2020, that the data collected from the state government revealed an estimated 10 million migrants had tried returning to their villages during the pandemic (Sharma, 2020). However, there is no official database that recorded the migrants who were rendered unemployed and faced wage theft or even the number of deaths during to tragic return journeys of these migrants.

The Migration in India 2020–21 report by the National Statistical Office which uses the Periodic Labour Force Survey reported that 51.6 per cent of rural migrants went back to their villages from the urban areas due to the pandemic and the lockdown. The delay in the conduction of the 2021 census on the pretext of the pandemic further adds to the data crisis of labour migration in India. Despite the long lists of aid and assistance promised, there is no real evidence (official data) about the efficiency and impact assessment of these programmes post their implementation (Rajan, 2020). International migration and reintegration of international returnees are yet to receive a serious level of attention. Even prior to COVID-19, despite India being heavily reliant on remittances, migration governance was more to do with facilitating migration while return migration did not receive concrete institutional backing as compared to the process of migration. The most prominent programme introduced by the Government of India on a national scale during COVID-19 and the largescale return migration was the Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support, intended at conducting a skill mapping exercise of migrant workers returning from abroad under the Vande Bharat Mission. Further investigation is required to study the impact of these steps taken by the government and ensure that these programmes are not reflective of reality without being inclusive of the nuances attached to a migrant's return.

## Rethinking reintegration beyond the COVID-19 pandemic

Established in 2004, the Ministry of Non-Resident Indians' Affairs, later renamed as the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, was merged with the Ministry of External Affairs in 2016. Due to the high proportion of migrants travelling to the Gulf countries, strong migration governance can be observed for this corridor even prior to the pandemic (Ministry of External Affairs, 2021). Some of them are:

- Opening of the Indian Workers Resource Centre in host countries to serve as a one-stop service outlet for the information and assistance needs of emigrants.
- Overseas Workers Resource Centre set up in Delhi enables emigrants/ prospective emigrants to seek information and file complaints against Recruiting Agents/ Foreign Employers.
- Indian Community Welfare Fund provides boarding and lodging for distressed overseas Indian workers in household domestic sectors and unskilled labourers.
- Mandatory Insurance under Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojana.
- Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Suraksha Yojana provides life insurance, pension and resettlement on return for overseas Indians having emigration check required passports.

With India ranking first among the countries with the highest number of international migrants, especially with most of them working in the low to the medium-skilled category, it is high time that India develops a pragmatic reintegration model since the return of these international migrants is inevitable (International Organization for Migration, 2017; Bossavie et al., 2021). Return migration is often not effectively edged out in most of the laws and policies about migration governance in India. The current models at place focus mostly on economic reintegration and do not accurately account for other dynamics such as the social and psychological reintegration of the returnees (Rajan et al. 2019a).

Reintegration is a concern for most of the developing countries in South Asia. A study in Sri Lanka revealed that there was a skill mismatch between returnees and the demand of the local labour market (Jayaratne et al., 2014). Bangladesh also faces the same issue and a study on Pakistani return migrants observed that those who had spent longer durations working abroad found it difficult to assimilate into the labour market in their origin country due to the lack of employment opportunities that met their expectations (Nawaz and Tonny, 2019; Arif, 1998). The proper implementation of reintegration measures already in place and innovative reintegration models that will ensure follow-up steps wherein not only the immediate financial concerns of the returnee are taken care of but also being inclusive of their future accounting for more complex problems such as social and psychological challenges while reintegrating will help improve migration governance (Arowolo, 2000). The Philippines is an example of a country having developed sustainable models of reintegration. To mainstream the return of migrants into society, the reintegration preparedness begins in the destination country itself, including counselling, awareness programmes on financial literacy, capacity-building and technology-related skills that can be taught to migrants before their return journey (Wickramasekara, 2019).

## Conclusion

Although migration can turn out to be a brain drain for countries of origin, the return of migrants cannot generally be associated with brain gain. Returnees do bring with them skillsets they have acquired while working abroad, but it is observed that the employment of these skills upon their return and their potential to be economically fruitful could be limited in countries of origin (Kumar, 2018; Zachariah et al., 2006). This can be attributed to the difference in both living and working conditions in countries of origin and destination. Varied conditions create varied opportunities that may not require the training one received abroad (Abraham, 2020). This makes the need for effective reintegration models, that are specific to each country and their regional variations become the key in tackling the reverse migration crisis of developing countries.

Unlike those who have not migrated, international and internal Indian migrants' right to participate in democratic decision-making through voting is extremely narrow as the voting system in India is constituency-based with no scope for remote voting (Rajan et al. 2019b). Migrants not being seen as a possible vote bank contributes to the lack of representation of the challenges faced by migrants both in the destination as well as in their place of origin upon their return. In planning and developing migration-related policies and programmes, it is important to identify and understand the different sets of challenges faced by the various vulnerable groups within migrants. In the case of those employed in the informal sector, it can be the economic and social exclusion, lack of access to basic necessities such as health care, inclusive working conditions or hygienic accommodation in the destination. Other subgroups like that of women face severe exploitation and harassment as compared to men. These vulnerabilities also play out in the reintegration process of these individuals. Hence, reintegration models should not only concentrate on harnessing the financial capital of the returnees but should be concerned with the holistic integration and capacity-building of the returnees.

Challenges related to migrants are pertinent to most of the countries of South Asia and South-East Asia, and platforms such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation can be used to reach a consensus regarding problems faced by migrants from these countries (Rajan and Kumar, 2023). South Asian and South-east Asian countries like India, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Nepal top the list of migrant-sending countries and also in the list of remittances received. Countries such as Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh are highly reliant on remittances to form a significant part of their GDP (KNOMAD, 2020). India is among the fastest growing economies in the Global South and given the instrumental role played by the country in today's

geopolitical climate, India can take up issues related to migration on a global scale in international forums. The Colombo process, a forum for Asian labour-sending countries aims at creating spaces for sharing experiences, creating solutions for problems faced by Asian migrants in the destination country and reviewing and monitoring the implementation of actions taken. Further, the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, an action-oriented dialogue formed in 2008 with 11 Member (origin) States of the Colombo process and seven countries of destination, to initiate conversations regarding the management of temporary contractual labour mobility in Asia is an encouraging step towards active global involvement.

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