Abstract of the Doctoral Thesis

In recent years the discourse on ‘migration and development’ has gained acceleration due to increased interest of researchers and policy makers on capitalization of the positive impacts of migration and remittances. Manifold increase in the flow of remittances to the developing countries, its counter cyclicality during times of economic crises and increased businesses at national and international levels due to its transfer process has been cited as some of the triggering factors to this ‘renewed’ interest in migration and remittances. Several country studies on remittances have generally brought to light the more positive developmental impacts of remittances at all levels including micro (migrant households), meso (village communities to which the emigrants belong) as well as macro (countries of emigration) levels.

However, from the existing literature, it is evident that a lacuna in research on many facets of migration and remittances and its implications for development in the Indian context, especially a multi level approach is clearly evident. India being the highest remittance receiving country today not only calls for greater understanding of the role played by the migrant worker’s remittances in the country, but also requires a synchronization of macro, micro as well as meso level research. At the same time, India being such a diverse country with different cultural communities having their own historical background of migration, state level variations in migration and remittances pattern is bound to exist, as indicated by studies. However, contemporary research on remittances in India fails to encompass these aspects. This doctoral study attempts to assess and compare the impact of remittances in two highly emigrating and remittance receiving states of Gujarat and Kerala in India through a village level approach to capture the micro and meso level impact of remittances.

The broad objectives of the study were mainly three fold:

1. First objective of the study was to understand the flow of remittances to India and its relative importance at the macro level.
2. Second was the *micro level* objective of understanding the economic and social impact of remittances on migrant households that receive them.

3. Since in this study, the role of both individual as well as collective remittances was aimed to be explored, the third was the *meso level* objective of assessing the spill over effect of remittances received by households to the local village economy and also exploring whether migrant associations have any role in the developmental activities of the villages.

The study adopted an analytical research design with sample survey approach. Secondary data sources such as data from Reserve bank of India and World Bank had been used to achieve the first objective. Migrant household being the unit of analysis for the second objective, a primary survey of a sample of migrant households in Dharmaj village in Anand district of Gujarat (n=120) and Mangalam village in Malappuram district of Kerala (n=150), had been conducted (total sample n=270), using a structured interview schedule. To achieve the third main objective which was to assess the impact of remittances (both individual and collective) on village development, data from the household survey as well as interviews with certain key informants in the villages using structured interview schedules for the village head or *sarpanch* and other informants had been conducted and the responses analysed. A case study of a migrant association related to the village in Gujarat (Dharmaj) that played a key role in development of the village has also been presented in the study.

Through multiple regression analysis, size of remittances received by the sample migrant households in the villages in Gujarat, Kerala as well as the total sample, was found to have been affected by various state specific household and migrant characteristics. Ordered logit regression results for economic well being of the migrant households receiving remittances, assessed in terms of perceptions of the respondents of the households, showed differential results for the two different villages with probability of the respondents in each of the villages for answering ‘Yes significantly’ for the question whether remittances led to better economic condition of the households, increased with the duration of remittances received by the households across both the states as well as the total sample. Slightly lower probabilities were observed for sample migrant households in Gujarat compared to those in Kerala attributable to the level of importance of remittances as their source of income.
Similarly, results for social well being of migrant households measured in terms of respondent’s perception for education and health care separately, showed variations across the villages in the two states.

At the meso level, effects of remittances, based on certain village specific development indicators on the villages were also found to be different for both the villages. Although both villages were comparable in terms of presence of public amenities and spill over effects of remittances received by migrant households to the non migrant households were observed, in terms of development, both villages displayed huge variations. Development of civic amenities and business in the village in Gujarat occurred much due to the contribution of its emigrant community through collective remittances, which is a distinctive feature compared to that of the village in Kerala. The village in Gujarat was self sufficient especially in terms of health and educational facilities within the village that served and were accessible to all sections of the village population. However, philanthropy from migrants also existed in the village in Kerala although in a much lower profile compared to the village in Gujarat.

These variations in two high remittance receiving villages belonging to highest remittance receiving states in India are explained through differences in migration patterns and differential impact of remittances, which have been found to have crucial policy implications in order to harness remittances for village development. The study has, therefore, brought out valuable findings that help enlighten understanding the importance and differential uses and impacts of international remittances in the high remittance receiving areas, at the state level in India.