TRANSFORMATION AFTER EMIGRATION

The last two chapters have discussed the problems and challenges faced by the Punjabi emigrants in the Middle East countries. A majority of them are living in the inhuman conditions, suffer from various socio-political disabilities in the host countries, but in spite of the worse working and living conditions, the number of the emigrants in all the Middle East countries is continuously increasing every year. The major reason behind this increase is economic gain which works as a pull factor for the emigrants and attract thousands of them from various states of India to the Middle East. The present chapter highlights the socio-economic impacts of emigration on the families of the dalits left behind. It also highlights the impact of dalit diaspora philanthropy on the community. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the flow of remittances to India and Punjab. It also discusses the frequency, channels and uses of remittances by the respondents. Second, highlights the economic impact of remittances on the life of dalit emigrants. The third part throws some light on social transformation among the dalits, due to emigration and highlights the transformation caused by the emigration in social spheres.

Emigrants are generally seen as contributing to the overall development of the society through remittances. Remittance is both cause and consequences of emigration (Kapur, 2010). It is assumed that the overseas community can and does serve as an important ‘bridge’ to access knowledge, expertise, resources and markets for the development of the country of origin (ibid). Many scholars have focused on the impact of emigration on the origin countries, but recently attention has also been given to the role of remittances in the economic development of societies left behind. The term remittance is generally defined as that portion of emigrant’s earnings sent from the migration destination to the place of origin. Remittances can be sent in cash or kinds. But, usually the term remittances are limited to indicate the monetary and other cash transfers by emigrants to their families at home countries. Remittances reflect the local labour working in the global economy and have been shown to explain partly the connection between growth and integration with the world economy (Adison, 2004). Large numbers of studies are available on the economic and social impacts of emigration on the society of origin, as Zachariah et al. (2002) focus on the areas like dimensions of emigration, human resources, disposition of remittances, consumption
Transformation After Emigration

and economic consequences of emigration. He also observes that migration from Kerala to other states of India and to countries abroad has become so rampant that its impact is felt in every aspect of life in the state. At present almost all families in Kerala seem to have been affected by the Gulf migration in one way or another.

6.1 Estimating Volume of the Flow of Remittances to India

Contemporary development discourses often represent emigrants from developing countries as “Agents of development” because of substantial resources they transmit back home through remittance, investments and philanthropic donations (Upadhya and Rutten, 2012). According to the World Bank’s estimates, remittance inflows in 2007 amounted $337 billion worldwide. According to a report on global migration and remittances at the end of 2012 remittance flows to the developing world are expected to exceed earlier estimates and total $406 billion, an increase of 6.5 per cent over the previous year. In the coming years remittances to developing countries are projected to grow by 7.9 per cent in 2013, 10.1 per cent (2014) and 10.7 per cent (2015) to reach $534 billion in 2015 (TNN, 2012). According to the same report the top recipients of officially recorded remittances for 2012 are India ($69.9 billion), China ($66 billion), the Philippines and Mexico ($24 billion each), and Nigeria ($21 billion). Other large recipients include Egypt, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Lebanon (ibid). The developing countries are getting the largest share of international remittances, total volume of financial remittance to developing countries rose from $57.5 billion in 1995 to $240 billion in 2007 (Kapur, 2010). For South Asia, remittances in 2012 are expected to total $109 billion, an increase of 12.5 per cent over 2011. The East Asia and Pacific region is estimated to attract $114 billion, an increase of 7.2 per cent over 2011 (TNN, 2012). Gardner (2011) in his study of Pakistan emigration said that remittances, mostly from the Gulf, make up the single largest source of Pakistan’s export earnings in 2010. On the other hand more than 12 per cent of global remittances are received by India which makes it to be the single largest recipient country for remittances, followed by Mexico and Philippines. The Indian Diaspora of 30 million is estimated to generate an annual income equal to about 30 percent of India’s GDP (Gross Domestic Product). India is the highest recipient of remittances in the world with 49 billion in 2009 and US $ 53.9 billion in 2009-10 and US $69.9 billion in 2012-13.
Figure 6.1

Remittances-Receiving Countries Amount in US $, Billions in 2009

Source: Gabi G. Afram (2012)
The share of overseas Indians in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has been far short of its potential. It is because India is the largest supplier of workforces worldwide with the largest workforce estimated 400 million and it is a country of young people with 54 per cent of its population in the age group below 25 years (MOIA 2008-09). Figure 6.1 shows the amount of remittances received by the 20 major countries of the world. Figure 6.1 shows that in 2009, India was the single largest receiver of the remittances followed by China and Mexico.

The employment of Indian workers abroad helps to earn foreign exchange and thereby adds to the foreign exchange reserves of the country. The private transfer of foreign exchange from the year 2001-2002 onwards is given in Figure 6.2. It may be observed that there has been a steady increase in the remittances from US$ 15.8 billion in 2001-2002 to US$ 53.9 billion in 2009-10 and US$ 69.9 billion in 2012-13. It is assessed that a significant proportion of this is contributed by the increasing number of unskilled and semi-skilled Indian workers employed in the Gulf countries and Malaysia (MOIA, 2009-10). In the year 2012 remittances into Kerala which is the largest emigrant sending state, is expected to rise by 40 percent to Rs. 60,000 crore, as against Rs 50,000 crore in 2011 (Ramalingam, 2012). Khadria (2006) also believes that most of the remittances have accrued from the unskilled workers whose consumption expenses in the Gulf are minimal because their families are not living with them. Although due to global economic crises total outflow of Indian working in the Middle East decreased 28 per cent in 2009 as compare to 2008 (discussed in details in 3rd chapter) Figure 6.2 shows that despite a deceleration of about 28 per cent in the outflow of workers to the Gulf, the flow of remittance receipts from overseas Indian workers increased by 7.8 per cent to US $ 46.9 billion during 2008-2009 from US $ 43.5 billion in during the 2007-08 and from US $ 46.9 billion to US $ 53.9 billion in 2009-10. It may be because of the strengthening of the dollar from 2008 onwards has restored the remittance value of the wages of the overseas Indian workers in the Gulf (MOIA, 2008-09). With this remittance flows, the Indian Diaspora has always played an important role in adding India’s national income and wealth, thereby being actively involved in the country’s development and strategic decision making (ibid).
Figure 6.2

Private Remittances to India in US $ Billion
2001 to 2013

As it is clearly depicted from the Figure 6.3 that remittances contribute significantly to the GDP of the country. In the year 2008-09 only private remittances from abroad contributed 4.6 per cent of the total GDP of the country.

**Figure 6.3**

![Private Transfers as a Percentage of GDP In India (in %)](chart.png)

Source: OIFC (2009)

### 6.2 Income, Savings and Investments

The impact of emigration on the respondents’ economic life can be assessed in terms of the analysis of the income before emigration and its comparison with the income after emigration or during emigration. As mentioned earlier, a majority of the respondents emigrated to the Middle East due to poverty and unemployment in Punjab. They emigrated in search of a better life for their families and children. It is observed that the proportion of savings and remittances from the salaries of the Gulf emigrants is higher than that of the workers in developed countries. Isaac (1997) also believes that unlike the emigrants of developed countries the Gulf workers neither aspired to become permanent citizens in the host countries nor was there any possibility of their becoming so. Gulf emigration is usually a purely temporary emigration and the worker has time horizons fixed by their labour contract within which they attempt to maximize savings and remit them home. As a result the per capita remittance of Gulf workers to India are estimated to be relatively higher than
that of the workers in developed countries despite the much higher income of the latter. Figure 6.4 shows the per month income of the respondents’ family before their emigration. Data reveals that before emigration, 12.33 per cent workers were earning up to Rs.1,000 -2000 per month and 27 per cent between Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 3000. The majority of the respondents (79.33 per cent) belonged to the families whose monthly income was between Rs. 2000 and 5000. Very few of them (8.33 per cent) had their family income above Rs. 5000 per month before their emigration. In contrast while working abroad the monthly income of respondents alone raised many times than the total income of the family before their emigration.

**Figure 6.4**

Table 6.1 shows the total earnings for the respondents in the host countries. It shows that 18 per cent of emigrant workers’ earnings were between Rs. 5,000 to 10,000, 45.66 per cent earned Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 15,000, 16.66 per cent earned Rs. 16,000 to Rs. 20,000 and 14.33 per cent of the respondents earned Rs 21,000 to 30,000 per months. There are only about 5 per cent of the respondents who even earned more than Rs. 30,000 per month. The comparison of the Figure 6.4 and Table 6.1 shows that the income of emigrant workers was many times higher than what they earned before emigrating. It is because most of the male workers go abroad
alone, they try to curtail their consumption expenditure so that they can remit larger sums to their families. They use only 20 per cent of their earnings to meet their basic needs at abroad. Figure 6.5 highlights the approximate expenditure by the respondents on their basic needs such as food, clothes, mobile phones and other items of daily use. A majority of the respondents (83.33 per cent) used to spend rupees 2000 to 3000 on their basic necessities. They always try to remit more and more money for their families.

The earnings of the respondents depend upon the three factors. The first is the type of work. Skilled workers earn more than unskilled workers and professionals earn more than skilled workers. Even workers engaged with the transport as a driver, mechanic also earns more than skilled workers in the construction industry. Secondly, duration of stay, short-term employment abroad (one to three years) earns less as compared to those staying for a long time abroad. Thirdly, there is a positive relationship between worker’s educational level and his remittances. An educated worker can easily shift to the highly paid jobs such as supervisor, foreman, general foreman etc. as compared to the unskilled or semiskilled workers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earnings (Pm)</th>
<th>S.B.S Nagar</th>
<th>Jalandhar</th>
<th>Kapurthala</th>
<th>Hoshiarpur</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In rupees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5000 – 10000</td>
<td>19 (25.33)</td>
<td>17 (22.66)</td>
<td>12 (16)</td>
<td>06 (8)</td>
<td>5418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11,000- 15,000</td>
<td>28 (37.33)</td>
<td>27 (36)</td>
<td>39 (52)</td>
<td>43 (57.33)</td>
<td>137 (45.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16,000 - 20,000</td>
<td>15 (20)</td>
<td>12 (16)</td>
<td>10 (13.33)</td>
<td>13 (17.33)</td>
<td>50 (16.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21,000 - 25,000</td>
<td>04 (5.33)</td>
<td>11 (14.66)</td>
<td>06 (8)</td>
<td>07 (9.33)</td>
<td>28 (9.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>260000 - 30,000</td>
<td>01 (1.33)</td>
<td>06 (8)</td>
<td>05 (6.66)</td>
<td>03 (4)</td>
<td>15 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 30,000/-</td>
<td>08 (10.66)</td>
<td>02 (2.66)</td>
<td>03 (4)</td>
<td>03 (4)</td>
<td>16 (5.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75 (100)</td>
<td>75 (100)</td>
<td>75 (100)</td>
<td>75 (100)</td>
<td>300 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in parentheses are column wise percentages
Note: (*) Including (Monthly Salary, Overtime, and Earning through work outside the company)
6.3 Methods of Transferring Remittances

The channels used for sending money are another important variable to discuss. The respondents have been asked to give a breakdown of the remittances they sent by the channels used for the transfer. It is because if the money can be sent easily, it may promote people to send it more frequently. From the total sample, 74.33 per cent of the respondents use conventional methods such as financial institutions (local and foreign banks, International Service Providers) (Figure 6.6), while 40 per cent of the remittances have been sent from abroad only through the Western Union and 17 per cent of the total remittances were transferred through the banks. 34.33 per cent respondents used both banks and western union for money transfer. UAE exchange is not much popular among the Punjabi emigrants for remitting money to their families. Interestingly due to cost effectiveness, 2.33 per cent of respondents used to send money through *Hundi System*. It refers to a system for remitting money to India from overseas through non-banking sources, primarily money changers. Under this system the money (foreign currency) given to a dealer abroad, for example in the Middle East, is transferred in Indian rupees to the family of the sender by an agent in Punjab. The highest proportion of the respondents showed the reliance on the legal method of money transfer. According to the respondents, money transfer through the Western Union is popular among the
emigrants because of four factors. First, transfer through the Western Union is usually quick, the family members used to receive the money through banks within four or five days or one week at the most, whereas using the Western Union they receive the money on the same days within few minutes. Second, the procedures involved, including the paper works, are also a major obstacle in using the banking channel for transferring money for the uneducated senders and receivers. Third, mobile phones have also made the money transfer easy, because the emigrants can easily send transaction identity number through message on mobile to his family members and by telling the code and after showing the identity proof one can easily get the money from any branch of Westerns Union Money Transfer. Fourth, the branches of Western Union are available in most of the villages of the Doaba region so it is very convenient for the family members to receive money from these branches.

![Figure 6.6](image)

**Figure 6.6**

Methods of Transferring Remittances From Gulf Countries to Punjab

6.4 Frequency of Remittances

The analysis of the frequency of remittances sent by the respondents from abroad is important because it helps in understanding the impact of remittances on the households of the emigrants. Figure 6.7 shows the frequency of remittances from Gulf to Punjab. The frequency of remittances depends upon the four factors. First is the payment of salaries to the workers abroad. As generally workers in the Middle East did not get a regular payment of their salaries. They were paid salaries over
two or three months. Therefore a majority of them (62.34 per cent) were not able to send money every month or regularly to their families. Secondly, the need of the family left behind, it depends on the number of earners in the home. If emigrants is the head of the household and only an earner than he has to send money every month for the subsistence of the family left behind. On the other hand the family can survive without regular remittances, if the numbers of earners in the home are more than one. Third, the cost of transferring the money is also a cause of irregular remittance. Some of the respondents said their salaries were low so they borrow money from their friends and known and send it once every two months. Fourth factor is the legal status of respondents. Some of the respondents who were working illegally were not able to send remittances regularly. They had to remit money through their friends or relatives. 37.66 per cent of the respondents use to send money to their families regularly.

**Figure 6.7**

**Frequency of Remittances from Gulf to Punjab**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Remittances</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every Month</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>37.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Two Months</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Months</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Months</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Months</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.5 **Use of Remittances**

International migration has become a strategy for individuals and families in developing countries to improve their socio-economic conditions. External remittances have become an increasingly important source of financial flows to these countries and have emerged as a single largest source of net financial flows to these countries (Kapur, 2010). The analysis of the remittances is an important aspect
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d of emigration studies as these help households to enhance their overall income and welfare of the community also. Therefore it is important to know that at what extent emigration could help in ameliorating their overall economic well being. Emigrants send a considerable share of their earnings to their families left behind. But the remittances sent by the emigrant could be used differently by the family members of the emigrant. The uses of the remittances may vary with the amount and frequency of remittances. The use of remittances also depends upon the priorities of the family. There has been a growing literature examining how emigrant workers’ remittances can affect households and communities in the home country. Among these studies, some have documented how emigrants have contributed to economic and social development of their communities through philanthropy. Kapur (2010) believes that overseas remittance positively contributed to the rural development and green revolution in Punjab. Findings of Kessinger (1974) and Helweg (1986) also show that remittances had contributed to the prosperity and the green revolution in the state. In his study of village “Jandiali” Helweg (1986) argues that the remittances were responsible for a large increase in yields. Money enable local residence to live better, invest in machinery, obtain and use a new variety of seeds, and gain new ideas of farming from abroad. Furthermore with the outflow of people, the pressure on the land decreases so that there was more production for less people. Kessinger (1974) in his study of village “Vilayatpur” highlights that remittance led to both investments in the land and the acquisition of more land, while the migration (especially of young men) reduced the pressure to subdivide the land into smaller plots. Earlier studies (Kessinger, 1974; Helweg, 1986; McLeod 1986; Verma, 2002) identified that construction of house and more importantly, the purchase of land were major areas of use of remittances as these two were linked with the reasons for emigration. Judge and Bal (2009) said earlier studies generally had not identified the repayment of lone as a major component of expenditure by the emigrants and his family. Further in their study they highlight that remittance was primarily used for the repayment of a loan by the dalit emigrants because they borrowed the money in order to pay the travel cost at the time of their emigration. Lipton (1980) in his study found that recipients use remittances first to pay off debts incurred in financing migration or for education of their children. According to Lipton, more than 90 per cent of remittances are spent on everyday consumption. Most
consumption behaviour serves to reinforce status, such as high payments for bride prices, feasts, funerals and the construction of pompous, luxurious houses. Much “chain migration” depends on education financed by remittances from older siblings. Investments only come in the fourth place of remittance use.

On the other hand Nair (1989) states that the available evidence suggests that emigration and the resultant receipt of remittances do not seem to have made any significant impact on economic growth rate of the state economies. Nor did they have substantial effect on employment rates, labour market conditions, agricultural development and industrialisation. It would appear that the major part of the remittances which followed in Kerala seeped into other regions of India through the mechanism of trade in consumer goods and construction materials caused by the changes in consumption patterns and the boom in the housing construction sector. Similarly Jain (2003) said the remitted money is mostly spent on the non productive items such as upkeep and maintenance of their households in India, paying outstanding debts, purchasing land and building houses, and buying consumer durables. Lavish expenditures on marriage and other festive occasions have also been reported from the Gulf migration areas in Kerala and elsewhere. It appears that very little of remittances is used for economically productive purposes.

Moreover, micro and macro level studies of remittances often produced contradictory findings. The high level of remittances to states such as Kerala and Punjab appears to contribute to economic growth, increase consumption level or enhanced social welfare at the macro level (Banerjee, 2002).

The amount of remittance per remitting emigrant is highly influenced by the period of emigration, marital status of the emigrants, level of education, skills and income etc. Those having higher level of earning and long stays in the host country are able to remit proportionately higher share of their earnings to their families. The decision on how much share of the remittances to invest and how much to consume depends upon many factors. First, the economic and social conditions of the emigrant’s household before emigration are two of the main determining factors. Emigrants may differ widely with respect to the pre-emigration economic position of the household. Emigrants from better-off households were likely to have access to some assets and resources before emigration, and these resources could form a base for further improvements and investments from new overseas earnings. Second, the
life cycle stages of emigrants may affect the patterns of remittance use. For example, at the time of fieldwork it has been observed that most Punjabi workers go abroad during the period in their lives when they are likely to have young children. Thus the consumption demands of their families are likely to increase during the period of emigration. Therefore a sizable amount of remittances has been used for the domestic purposes. Third, in Punjab, high costs are involved in securing a job in the Middle East, and those who succeed in finding employment abroad finance their overseas trips in various ways. The salaries earned during the first few months or even a year generally disappear as a consequence of the debts incurred due to the emigration. Fourth, the duration of the stay abroad can be one of the most important factors in determining the use of remittances by emigrants and their families. A longer stay can provide families with more resources for investments. The absence of any stable income implies that the earnings from overseas employment are likely to be used for the maintenance of the household and little is left for savings and investments.

In has been observed that some respondents got more benefits from remittances than others. It depends upon the three factors. First, respondents who stayed abroad between two and six years directed substantial amounts of remittances to savings and investment, but the remittances of those staying for less than three years was not enough to invest in real estate or businesses. Second, the cost of emigration is negatively related to the amount of remittances directed towards investment. The respondents who financed emigration from their own sources of funds were able to use more remittances for investment than those who borrowed money to go abroad. Thirdly, respondents who had additional sources of income in their families other than remittances were able to put a higher share of remittances into investments than households where remittances were the only source of income.

In the present study the use of remittances has been discussed in two different forms. The first, use of remittances for productive purposes and the second for domestic use. Figure 6.8 provides vivid details on the use of remittances. It shows that out of the total 300 respondents who used the remittance for productive purposes 16.33 per cent invested on purchase of agriculture land in their villages. It is interesting to note that the ownership of land and property has been changed in the Doaba region. Dalits in the past use to perform functions, as agricultural labourers
Transformation After Emigration

on the land of higher caste under the “Bartan Bhanji or Jajmani” system, because Jats had their monopoly over the agricultural land and dalits were totally dependent upon them. But due to emigration of dalits and due to their changed economic conditions, now Jats are losing their monopoly over land because some of marginal land owners Jats are now selling their lands to move to the developed countries. In some villages of Doaba dalits particularly Chamars have purchased agricultural land on which their forefathers use to work as “Seris” or “Sepis. It is a remarkable change that has been occurring among the dalits of Doaba due to emigration. In the Kadyana village of Tehsil Phillaur, about 60 per cent of agricultural land have been owned by the dalits, particularly by the Chamar caste.

Madan Lal 65 a Chamar by caste was the first person from his village (Panjdhera, Phillaur) who emigrated to the UAE he was educated and at the time of his emigration he was matriculation passed and was working in the Indian army. But due to some reasons he had been suspended from his duty. After coming back he was unemployed later. He came to know about job opportunities in the Middle East through a new paper and decide to emigrate to the UAE. But due to poor economic conditions he could not arrange money to pay for his travel cost. He tried many times but ultimately he borrowed money from the money lender and sell his wife’s jewellery. In 1976 he went to Dubai. He had to face so many difficulties in the first year of this emigration but later he learnt Arabic language. Due to his army service he could speak and understand English language as a result of this, his English boss promoted him from steel fixture to foreman. Within ten years of his service he became general foreman his salary and experience was increasing year by year. He applied for a work permit for his brother due to his reputation and links he succeeded in obtaining work permits for his relatives and villagers. In this way he earned a commission four times more than his salary.

He used this money for purchasing agriculture land in his village, when he came back to India at the age of 60 years he had 45 “acres” of land. He has purchased land more than 80 per cent of the Jat families of his village and he also spent about 30 lack rupees in construction of three story building and huge money on the other luxuries in the home like cars, TV, AC, etc. He was the first Chamar of his village who sent his son to USA. Presently he has eleven shops in the main
market of Phillaur. Due to his economic status he has become “Sarpanch” of his village.

Second major productive use of remittance is emigration of family members, 58 per cent of the respondents have financially supported their family members for emigration. As it has already been discussed in chapter third that transnational and national network of relatives has performed a very important role in perpetuating and strengthening the process of emigration. The emigration of other family members became possible with the financial help of already emigrated member of the family.

Thirdly, very few of them 9 per cent and 8.33 per cent of the respondents have invested on higher education of their family members and to start a new business respectively when returned permanently (Figure 6.8). The remittances to the households were meant mainly for the subsistence of the emigrant's relatives back home. About 96 per cent of the respondents reported that their remittances were used for subsistence of their families.

Further, the study shows that large numbers of the respondents have invested money on the non-productive items. As mentioned above, emigrants of the Middle East countries come from the poor family backgrounds. The majority of them had arranged their travel cost by borrowing money from money lenders or relatives. Therefore the first task that had to do was repayment of their debts. 94 per cent of the respondents have repaid their debts from their earnings. Some of them, who returned after one or two years of emigration, even could not even repay their debt (Figure 6.8).

Another important use of remittances is marriage of family members. 62 per cent of respondents invested remittance on the marriage of their sisters, brothers or daughters. Helweg’s (1979) study also shows that expenditure on the daughter’s marriage was a symbol of prestige for emigrants and their families. About 18.33 per cent have given donation to the religious places of their villages or Deras.

6.6 Emigration and Change in Housing Conditions

A great body of literature has shown the interest of emigrant workers and their families in improving their housing conditions by investing the remittances (Kessinger, 1974, Helweg, 1986, McLeod 1986, Verma, 2002, Ballard, 2005,
The impact of Gulf emigration on development is more visible in Punjab particularly in the Doaba region. The contribution of Gulf emigration to development can be seen in various areas like housing, transportation, educational and religious institutions, amenities and other infrastructural facilities. The main impact of emigration is on housing sector. Since 1970 dalits of the Doaba region have been witnessing the construction of palatial houses due to remittances sent by the emigrant workers from the Gulf as well as developed countries. Judge (2010) referring his study of village Ajram of Hoshiarpur says that due to emigration a visible change can be observed in the houses of dalits of this village. In 1984, when he visited Ajram first time most of the dalits houses were *Kacha* and after seven years of his visit dalit started constructing *Pukka* houses. During his third visit in 2000, he observed that most of the dalits who had returned from Gulf had opened shops in the village. Gulati (1997) in her study of Kerala observed that after emigration the emigrants’ constructed better houses, their houses are now bigger and stronger in Kerala. Singh (2013) also observed that each household in Kerala that has an emigrant have a better quality of household and higher educational qualifications.

It is interesting to note that a majority of respondents (59.66 per cent) have purchased house plots for constructing a new house and 68.33 per cent have constructed their new houses, whereas before emigration they use to live in their father’s house (Figure 6.8). There are some social and cultural reasons that explain the priority for housing construction among the emigrants. In Joint families remittances are mostly not sent directly to the emigrant’s wife, but generally to one of the man within the household. This situation is widely known to generate numerous conflicts between emigrants’ wives and their in-laws. This creates a push for emigrants’ nuclear families to establish their own households by constructing a new house either in the native village or in nearby villages. Besides increasing the personal liberty of emigrant’s wives, this can also be an effective strategy for emigrants to escape from the heavy financial burden of supporting large joint families. Figure 6.9 shows the approximate amount spent on the construction of new house. 52 per cents of the respondents spent Rs. one lakhs to ten lakhs on the construction of new houses. Interestingly there are 22 per cent of respondents who have even spent more than 20 lakhs rupees on the construction of their houses.
The Figure 6.3 shows the multiple responses of the respondents.

Figure 6.8
Uses of Remittances by the Respondents

Note: The Figure 6.3 shows the multiple responses of the respondents.
### Table 6.2
Details of Luxury Items in the Home of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Luxury Item</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>if yes: Purchased Before Emigration</th>
<th>Purchased After Emigration</th>
<th>Purchased from India</th>
<th>Purchased from Abroad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TV / LCD</td>
<td>06 (2)</td>
<td>294 (98)</td>
<td>197 (67.00)</td>
<td>97 (32.99)</td>
<td>238 (80.95)</td>
<td>56 (19.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerator</td>
<td>25 (8.33)</td>
<td>275 (91.66)</td>
<td>103 (34.45)</td>
<td>172 (62.54)</td>
<td>275 (100)</td>
<td>00 (00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scooter/ motorcycle</td>
<td>61 (20.33)</td>
<td>239 (79.66)</td>
<td>23 (9.62)</td>
<td>216 (90.37)</td>
<td>239 (100)</td>
<td>00 (00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>267 (89)</td>
<td>33 (11)</td>
<td>01 (3.03)</td>
<td>32 (96.96)</td>
<td>33 (100)</td>
<td>00 (00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Processor</td>
<td>90 (30)</td>
<td>210 (70)</td>
<td>33 (15.71)</td>
<td>180 (85.71)</td>
<td>128 (60.95)</td>
<td>82 (39.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VCD/VCR</td>
<td>47 (15.66)</td>
<td>253 (84.33)</td>
<td>88 (34.78)</td>
<td>165 (65.21)</td>
<td>192 (75.88)</td>
<td>61 (24.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer/ Laptop</td>
<td>255 (85)</td>
<td>45 (15)</td>
<td>01 (2.22)</td>
<td>44 (97.77)</td>
<td>21 (46.66)</td>
<td>24 (53.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/C</td>
<td>275 (91.66)</td>
<td>25 (8.33)</td>
<td>00 (00)</td>
<td>25 (100)</td>
<td>18 (72)</td>
<td>07 (28)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further it has been found that the living standard of the emigrant’s family increased after their emigration. For measuring the standard of living of the respondents, indicators given by Gunatilleke (1993) have been used; it was decided to use the following four indicators:

1) The absence or presence of costly items such as cars, laptop, computer, refrigerator, etc.
2) The kind of housing: Pukka or Kacha (own or do not own a house)
3) Use of vehicle by the members of respondent’s family.
4) Respondent’s self perception of his standard of living.

During the fieldwork the respondents were asked to report their housing conditions before and after emigration. Figure 6.8 shows that owning a residential house was not common before emigration. Only 30 respondents owned house before their emigration. Another major change was in repairing the housing unit, 34 per cent of respondents have renovated their houses after returning back. Remittances have enabled households to upgrade their homes in the modern style, which include new rooms to the existing housing units. The Table 6.2 shows the luxury items in the homes of respondents. It has been observed that majority of the respondents have purchased TV, refrigerator, vehicles, kitchen assists, computers and air conditions after their emigration. Some of the respondents have imported luxury items such as air conditions, computers and food processors from abroad. Only 8.33 per cent of
the households had a refrigerator before emigration, 91.66 per cent purchased refrigerator after emigration and 79.66 per cent reported having a vehicle after their emigration.

The data depict that the living standard of the emigrant’s families has improved because of emigration. It implies that a large number of respondents who have emigrated to the Gulf have been able to improve the living standard of their families.

Gurmej 59 a resident of village Johal near Goraya was working as a cycle repairer before his emigration and belonged to a joint family. He was the eldest among his six brothers and two sisters, his parents earn their livelihood through weaving and sometimes by agricultural wage labour. The whole family was engaged in the agriculture labour. The economic condition of his family was extremely poor. In 1981 there was a trend in Punjab villages that every youngster wanted to emigrate to the Gulf countries because of high salaries and totally different environment. They were sending large sums of money to their families. The poverty of the family and high salaries in abroad attracted Gurmej and motivated him for emigration. He read an advertisement in the newspaper about the demand of painter in the Dubai. He met a travel agent and asked for the procedure and cost of emigration. He got disappointed when he came to know about the cost of emigration since he had to pay six thousand rupees as visa fee and air ticket which was a challenge for his family. His father borrowed the money from his landlord and from some relatives. In the Middle East Gurmej was a semi killed construction worker. He remitted 80 per cent of his salary and kept only 20 per cent with him. Gurmej was worried about the marriage of his two sisters because his income was not sufficient to fulfil even some fundamental needs of his family so Gurmej became nervous and was worried that if he failed or if something happened to him there would no one to take care of his old parents and brother sisters. He decided to bring his brother in the Dubai.

He got the visa from his company by using his personal links and send to his brother, after two years of his emigration he brother also came in Dubai. Now both of the brothers were started sending money from abroad he also had opportunities to work outside the company, in the houses of nationals which further raised his income. He used to work for 16 hours in a day and live very modest life, sharing
Transformation After Emigration

room with the nine persons in a camp where the single bathroom was shared by 20 persons.

He spent barely 10 per cent of his salary for his necessary expenditure and tried to save maximum in order to get his family out of the misery of poverty as soon as possible. Sometimes he used to skip his meal and tea for saving more money. He spent 28 years in Dubai in DCC Company and when he returned he was a successful returnee.

He helped seventeen persons in getting visa, 4 of his friends, five brothers, two sisters’ husbands, two brothers in laws and three persons from his village and a son. During these twenty eight years he purchased 3 plots, constructed a big house. He purchased land on which his family members used to work as wage labourer before his emigration. He gave good education to his children, one of his son emigrated to Australia on student visa and the other one has his finance business in the Philippines. His elder son is teaching in a college and pursuing PhD from a university. He spent half of his life in “Dangri” (Labour uniform in the Middle East) but he did his best for his family, relatives and friends.

6.7 Transient Diaspora Philanthropy

Diaspora philanthropy is an increasingly significant modality of emigrant resources flowing to India. This category encompasses a wide range of activities, from donation to religious institutions, to support for Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or charities of individual initiative (Upadhya and Rutten, 2012). According to Kapur et al (2004) the estimated donation to religious institutions and charitable institutions from NRIs amounted to $5,472 million between 1995 to 2002. However there are no reliable figures on the extent or ultimate destinations and use of NRI philanthropy, in part because a large proportion of such funds to enter India through informal channels (Guha, 2011).

The respondents informed that they used to send donation via remittance to family members who then donate to the religious organization (Guru Ravisass Mandir, Dharamshala, Sat Sang Ghar, village schools etc.). Some time respondents themselves donate in the forms of cash and gifts when they return. It is observed that there are number of caste specific gurudawaras, ancestral places (Jathere), Dharmshalas of every caste group in the villages of the Doaba region. The primary
source of finance for the construction, renovation and maintenance of these places is philanthropy in the form of remittances. Figure 6.10 shows that more than half of the donors, donated to the religious organizations in their areas. Some studies (Dusenbery and Tatla, et. al 2009 and Kapur et al, 2004) also show that donation to the religious institutions is the first priority of Punjabi emigrants. According to a 2002 survey by the NRI Sabha Punjab, the diaspora expenditure on social projects in each development block of the districts of the Doaba region with forty blocks ranged from Rs. 250 to 400 million during the 1999s. However the largest percentage of philanthropic contributions were spent on religious places and village gates (Dhesi, 2009). Rajan and Varghese (2010) said although the philanthropic remittances have grown in importance over the last two decades, but while the earlier generation of emigrants often sent donation to establish large gates in their home village and towns in the memories of their ancestors, currently such resources are directed more to supporting development activities or gurudwaras. Further, 18.51 per cent have donated to the youth clubs and registered voluntary organizations active in the villages or surrounding areas for the welfare of society. 13.75 per cent of them donated for the welfare of the community e.g. donation to the schools, Dharmshalas, Janj Ghar, renovation and construction of community halls etc. some of them also donate to the more than one group stated in the following Figure 6.10.

**Figure 6.10**

![Graph showing major investments by the respondents in the village](chart.png)
6.8 Social Status Enhancement

It has been observed that when men emigrate to the Middle East they do so with two clear objectives, first, to improve the economic level of the household and second to raise the social status of the family. Emigration and remittances have not only deeply affected regional economy, but has also changed the social face of dalit community in the Doaba region. Changed economic statuses further became the cause of better lifestyle and also acquire more wealth in the society. Both better living standard and larger wealth help one to acquire better social status in the society. According to the World Migration Report (2005) returned emigrants can be a powerful factor for modernization and social change in small towns and villages, despite the occasional tension in the initial stage.

Emigration is not only an attempt to secure better livelihoods, but also a clear avenue of upward social mobility. For instance, besides its economic and well being value, the construction of houses, the typical investment priority of emigrants is also an expression of the newly acquired social status. The emigrants also contribute to the renovation or construction of religious and community places in their village such as Guru Ravidass Mandir, Gurudawara and Dharmshalas, Memorial gates etc. It not only fulfills an intrinsic, religious function, but also adds to their social prestige. In the words of Mann and Mann (2009) “usually status is gained through wealth, but eminence and Izzat (honour) only come through contribution towards common causes and by building vertical and horizontal social alliances”.

It has been observed that emigration has also accelerated the breakdown of ancient caste hierarchies in Punjab. In fact, emigration has partially contributed for the creation of a new system of social stratification in the Doaba region in which lower castes started claiming equal status with the higher castes. Dalit emigrant households are forming a new kind of ‘emigrant elites’ in all over the region. Emigration can be seen as a threat to traditional forms of structures, hereditary inequality based on caste system, kinship, and land ownership which were the main cause of lower position of the dalit emigrants in the society.

The rise of new elite groups among the dalits, are going in parallel with the relative demise of traditional elites (higher caste). Emigration of dalits can be seen as a liberation of the community from the traditional structure of the society in which they were placed at the bottom of the hierarchy. There are lots of differences
between the socio-economic status and living standard of dalits of Doaba region and other parts of the state. Emigration and remittances have become the main cause of emancipation of dalit community in Doaba region. Throughout the Doaba region, emigration has offered new opportunities to the dalits to earn an external income independent of the constraints set by traditional peasant society in which they were placed downtrodden formerly landless, and powerless. Dalits have now started earning huge wages from abroad that allow them to buy land, construct new houses and a change in their traditional occupation and socioeconomic image. Consequently, lower castes increasingly started rejecting traditional authoritarian structures in which Jats were dominating. Respondents reported that now they started refusing to work as Sepi or Seeries for Jats. In his study of 13 villages of Doaba region Jodhka (2004) found none of dalits worked as attached labourer on the land under the dominant caste farmers.

Harbans Lal 56 year old of Mehliana village, district S.B.S Nagar informed that he emigrated to the Dubai (UAE) in 1986 as a mason. When he got his first salary, he immediately sent through “Hundi” to his family to repay the debt that he had borrowed from the Jat family, for whom his family including his father used to work as attached labourer. His wife also uses to work as housemaids and remove cow dung in the same family. After paying the debt he stopped his father and his wife to work for the Jats (landlord) in their houses. After ten year in 1996 his father became “Sarpanch” of the village. He has also settled his two sons in France.

Similarly Roshan Lal 38 year old Sansi by caste resident of the village “Ganna Pind” said before his emigration his father used to work as daily wage earners and mother used to work as a housemaid in Phillaur city. He had emigrated through a private travel agent to Kuwait when he was just 20 years old. His family used his remittance for the construction of a new house, and marriage of his two sisters and repayment of the loan. His father has opened a small grocery shop in the village. His mother stopped working as maidservant even a woman from their own community works in their home as a maidservant.

To further assess the perception of respondents about their present socioeconomic status, they were asked to rank their overall socio-economic status after their emigration and whether the process of emigration improved their status. This was done to give an indication of relative poverty, and is different from the
poverty line approach, which shows the absolute poverty dimension. The ranking of a household shows the perception of the respondents regarding their overall economic status relative to that of the other households of the community and castes. The majority of respondents believe that their socio-economic status has improved after emigration (Table 6.3). This change can be observed in all the districts of Doaba region. 81.66 per cent of the emigrants reported a better status after emigration. 90.66 per cent of the respondents believe that before emigration their socio-economic status and status in the caste hierarchy was low. Because of emigration two types of changes have happened. First, the economic conditions of dalits have improved due to emigration, by virtue of this they started caliming equal status with the Jats and other higher castes. Secondly, they became economically independent from the landlord caste. Traditionally dalits were economically dependent on the Jats, they use to perform functions on the land of the Jats as Seeri or Kammies and their main occupations were serving the higher caste. Due to this dependence they were placed at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. But due to emigration now they feel that they are not lower or down trodden their economic condition is improving day by day. 81.66 per cent of the respondents said their socio-economic condition has improved. Only 18.33 per cent of respondents reported no improvement in their status. And 1.66 per cent now categorized their caste higher than Jats and other dominant castes. Even according to the World Migration Report (2005: 179) “findings of the various studies show that remittances have an equalizing effect on income distribution in various countries. It can also change the social hierarchy in communities, creating a new class of money lenders, such as women whose husbands are abroad”.

Table 6.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Caste</th>
<th>Before Emigration</th>
<th>After Emigration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>02 (0.66)</td>
<td>05 (1.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>26 (8.66)</td>
<td>240 (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>272 (90.66)</td>
<td>55 (18.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300 (100)</strong></td>
<td><strong>300 (100)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures in parentheses column wise percentages*
Table 6.4
Main Causes of Low Position of Dalits in the Caste Hierarchy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>S.B.S Nagar</th>
<th>Jalandhar</th>
<th>Kapurthala</th>
<th>Hoshiarpur</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty and Illiteracy</td>
<td>32 (42.66)</td>
<td>40 (53.33)</td>
<td>37 (49.33)</td>
<td>43 (57.33)</td>
<td>152 (50.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependency on higher castes</td>
<td>12 (16)</td>
<td>16 (21.33)</td>
<td>18 (24)</td>
<td>16 (21.33)</td>
<td>62 (20.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>13 (17.33)</td>
<td>11 (14.66)</td>
<td>13 (17.33)</td>
<td>07 (9.33)</td>
<td>44 (14.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignorance by the government</td>
<td>18 (24)</td>
<td>08 (10.66)</td>
<td>07 (9.33)</td>
<td>09 (12)</td>
<td>42 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75 (100)</td>
<td>75 (100)</td>
<td>75 (100)</td>
<td>75 (100)</td>
<td>300 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures in parentheses column wise percentages*

Further the respondents have been asked to tell the main cause of their low position in the society before emigration. A majority of them (50.66 per cent) said poverty and illiteracy were the main causes of their lower position in the caste hierarchy (Table 6.4). Here we can see the direct link between the emigration of dalits and improvement in their social status. First, emigration to the Middle East has given tremendous job opportunities to the large number of dalits of Doaba region as a result their problem of unemployment and poverty ended up. Second, emigration has put a serious threat to the “Jajmani System” result end of dependency of different castes on each other it created an environment in which dalits could move upward.

6.9 Inter Caste Relation after Emigration

The impact of emigration can also be seen on the inter caste relations in the villages of Doaba region. In the traditional Punjabi society, there was a durable relationship between the Jat and dalits on family to family basis. Dalits families attached with the landlords were known as Kamin. They use to do all kinds of work in the house and the land of the landlords (Judge and Bal, 2009). Dalits were dependent upon the landlords for their day to day needs. Jodhka (2002) also noted that “the scheduled caste population of the region has been comparatively vulnerable
in the economic structure of the village. Their ownership of agricultural land is among the lowest in the country”. Similarly Judge (2002) noted that “as the entire village community depended on the agrarian production for its existence and livelihood; the land owner occupied the central position as far as the economic life of the village was concerned”. But due to emigration there is a drastic change that occurred in the Doaba region a huge number of dalits particularly from Chamar caste started emigrating to the various countries of the world, which resulted in the breakdown of “Jajmani” system and economic empowerment of dalit community. As a result of changed economic conditions dalits of Doaba region particularly Chamars have become much more assertive about their human as well as socio-political rights and caste identity compared to the other parts of the state. Even international emigration played very significant role in the social movements among the dalits. In the words of Judge (2010c) “Mangoo Ram, the founder of the Ad-dharam movement in Punjab was the product of two major processes that occurred in Punjab, namely the international migration and the Ghadar movement. Their changed economic conditions have also helped them to construct their caste identity”. In the words of Judge (2012) “the Chamars have begun to assert their caste identity, a trend that was not only absent in the 1970s but there was also a tendency to hide their caste status. He further states that there is an obvious trend in publicly displaying their identity. It is evident from the fact that one can find graffiti on personal vehicles signify the caste identity of the owner for example, “Putt Chamaran De’ (Son of Chamars) could be seen scribbled on the backside of motor vehicles. It is not only an identity assertion, but an effort to create counter-structure, because such a trend was exclusively found among the dominant Jats”.

The end of tendency among the Chamars to hide their caste name has emerged as a result of the changed socio-economic status of the dalits in the Doaba region. No such type of tendency can be seen in the other two regions Majha and Malwa of state. Except from some villages of the Attari constituency of Amritsar district from where Gulzar Singh Ranike a Mazbhi by caste has been elected four times as MLA.

The responses of the respondents regarding the impact of emigration on the inter caste relations are stated in Table 6.5. The data clearly depict that emigration
Transformation After Emigration

has a positive impact on the inter caste relations. 21.66 per cent of the respondents said due to their changed economic condition, mutual respect between the dalits and higher castes has increased. The respondents reported that they now get good treatment from the higher caste and class people. It is because they have cash money and are able to purchase fertile land for agriculture and small plots for the construction of new modern style houses. Emigration also became the cause of social inclusion of dalits in the mainstream of society. A majority of respondents (38.66) said socio-cultural and political participation of their community has increased after their return. Very few of them reported the negative effect of emigration on the inter caste relation between the dalits and higher castes. 8.33 per cent respondents believe that mutual jealousy and friction between the higher and lower caste has increased after their return.

Table 6.5
Impact of Emigration on Social Relations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact of emigration on social relation</th>
<th>S.B.S Nagar</th>
<th>Jalandhar</th>
<th>Kapurthala</th>
<th>Hoshiarpur</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mutual respect and interaction has increased</td>
<td>19 (25.33)</td>
<td>11 (14.66)</td>
<td>17 (22.66)</td>
<td>18 (24)</td>
<td>65 (21.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Cultural and political participation of dalits increased</td>
<td>25 (33.33)</td>
<td>32 (42.66)</td>
<td>26 (34.66)</td>
<td>33 (44)</td>
<td>116 (38.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic equality increased and economic dependency decreased</td>
<td>12 (16)</td>
<td>14 (18.66)</td>
<td>13 (17.33)</td>
<td>08 (10.66)</td>
<td>47 (15.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No change has occurred</td>
<td>11 (14.66)</td>
<td>12 (16)</td>
<td>14 (18.66)</td>
<td>09 (12)</td>
<td>46 (15.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Jealousy and Antagonism has Increased</td>
<td>08 (10.66)</td>
<td>06 (8)</td>
<td>05 (6.66)</td>
<td>07 (9.33)</td>
<td>26 (8.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>75 (100)</strong></td>
<td><strong>75 (100)</strong></td>
<td><strong>75 (100)</strong></td>
<td><strong>75 (100)</strong></td>
<td><strong>300 (100)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in parentheses column wise percentages
6.10 Inter Caste Relation in Gulf Countries

Emigration of dalits have strong impact on the inter caste relations even in the host society. A majority (94.33 per cent) of the dalit respondents said that unlike Punjab they were having very good relations (except from some religious frictions) with the higher caste emigrants working in the Middle East (Figure 6.11). It is because of four factors. First, the majority of the Punjabis in the Middle East belong to the lower castes, they constitute more than 85 per cent of the total emigrants, working in the Middle East. The majority of them belong to the charmer caste. They are numerically dominant group, by virtue of this they dominate on the other castes groups. Secondly, the majority of the dalits are engaged with the skilled occupations, because they were already used to do skilled jobs like mason, carpenter, painter, driver etc. On the other hand higher caste emigrants particularly Jats who emigrated to the Middle East were working as semi skilled or unskilled worker. They have to work under the supervision of skilled workers who are Dalits. Therefore there is no scope of caste domination and antagonism between the two communities. As a result the relationship between the two castes communities became smooth and friendly in the host societies. Thirdly, Jats and Bharmins who emigrated to the Gulf in majority belongs to the marginalized families in Punjab and have no good economic background so both the communities Jats, Barahmins (Higher castes) and dalits have a similar economic background in their motherland. It became the major cause of their assimilation with each other and having smooth and friendly relationships. Fourth, living condition and accommodation facilities for skilled workers are better than unskilled workers which again support the superiority of dalits over non dalits.

![Figure 6.11](image)

**Figure 6.11**

**Interaction with the Higher Caste Persons in the Host Country**

- S.B.S Nagar: 71 (94.66%), 4 (5.33%)
- Jalandhar: 67 (89.33%), 8 (10.66%)
- Kapurthala: 72 (96%), 3 (4%)
- Hoshiarpur: 73 (97.33%), 2 (2.66%)

**Name of the Districts**
6.11 Separate Religious Places Abroad

Emigrations of dalits in the various countries of the world constitute a part of Punjabi diaspora and also the same community (Judge and Bal, 2009). Where ever they go they bring their culture, religious practices beliefs with them. Despite the religious rigidity and orthodox policies of the host governments, Punjabis have constructed a large number of religious places in the Middle East. It is interesting to note that 86.66 per cent of the respondents reported that they had separate religious places for worship in the Middle East. Initially in the late 1970s when dalits and other caste groups from Punjab started emigrating to the Gulf countries, they were not allowed to construct there any religious place. But later in the governments of the host countries realized and permitted them to construct religious places like Gurudwara, Sat Sang Ghar, and Mandirs etc for worship. In most of the Gulf countries except Saudi Arabia large number of Indian religious places can be seen.

The issue of religious places is an important dimension of inter caste interaction and caste system. One dimension of religious places identified by Jodhka (2002) is separate gurudwaras for each caste in the villages of Punjab. According to Webster (2007) there are about 10,000 dalit gurudwaras in Punjab. A number of studies (Judge and Bal, 2008, Jodhka, 2004, Webster, 2007) show that there are discriminations against dalits in the gurudawarsa of higher caste. In reaction of these discriminations dalits have started constructing separate religious places of their own. Jodhka (2004) said dalits have worked out their own strategies of resisting this kind of discrimination. The most popular strategy of resistance has been to construct separate places for worship for them. In their study of village Shankar of Doaba region Mann and Mann (2009) observed that in the village Shankar lower caste people used to share religious places with other so-called upper social classes, but at the same time they often resent their treatment, which is really can be that of latent hostility or being unwelcome. So being able to build a separate religious place means a new assertion of independence by such a social group caste and an end to ‘dependency’ upon Jats. In his study of Ad-dharnis in England, Judge (2002) observed that each caste has its own gurudawara in England. Economic status of the person is less talked about than caste background and people are more bothered about the caste status.
Similarly respondents informed that in most of the labour camps dalits particularly Chamars have constructed their own separate religious place whom they call as Ravidass Mandir. Three causes are responsible for their separation. First, initially the gurudwaras were not only the symbol of Sikh religion, it was like a community centre in which all Punjabis used to get together on holiday and during Indian festivals. They used to celebrate Indian festivals like Diwali, Lohri and birth anniversaries of ten Gurus and Guru Ravidass, and other dalit saints e.g. Valmik, Namdev and Kabir etc and sometime they also celebrate the birth anniversary of Dr. B.R Ambedkar. Initially the concept of the Gurudawara was a symbol of “Punjabi (Punjabi hood) in Gulf countries. Members of every caste used to go there on “Jumma day” (Official holiday on Friday). Apart from the Sikh holy book Guru Granth Sahib, in these gurudwaras they also placed a picture of Guru Ravidass and sometime the picture of saint Valmiki. But the so called higher caste Sikhs (Jats, Sainis) always opposed them for installing pictures of Guru Ravidass and other dalit saints in the gurudwara. After the Talhan violence on June, 5 2003 the friction between the higher and lower caste emigrants was on peak. Even Chamars did not want to go to the gurudwaras of higher castes. Saint Naranjan Dass head of Dera Sach Khand Ballan also encouraged them to be separate from the Jats. Therefore they collected money from the dalit emigrants and constructed their own religious places Guru Ravidass Mandirs in various labour camps with the permission of higher authority. After the murder of saint Ramanand the close aid and chosen successor of the chief of the Dera Sachkhand Ballan in Vienna, Austria on May 24, 2009, some of the dalits replaced the Guru Granth Sahib with the “Amrit Bani” granth (contain the bani (hymn) of Guru Ravidass) sacred text of Dera Sachkhand Ballan in their Ravidass Mandirs. Most of the separate gurudwaras/ Ravidass Mandirs are in UAE and Bahrain. Respondents also informed that the followers of Dera Sacha Sauda also have stopped going to the gurudwaras after the incidence of clash between Sikhs and the followers of Dera Sacha Sauda, Sirsa on May 2007.

It is interesting to note that heads of various deras regularly arrange their visit to Middle East countries. Some respondents reported that Sant Niranjan Dass of Dera Sachkhand Ballan, Saint Hardev Singh of Nirankari, and Head of Dera Radha Sawami Bias used to visit UAE and Kuwait regularly. Further following the
trend of Punjab, in many cities of the UAE there are a large number of “Radha Sawami Sat Sangh Ghar” “Nam Charch Ghar of Dera Sachha Souda”, Sirsa and Guru Ravidass Mandir and Bhagwan Valmiki Mandir have come into existence.

**Figure 6.11**

**Separate Religious Place for Worship at Abroad**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>260 (80.66%)</td>
<td>40 (13.33%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**6.12 Impact of Emigration on Children’s Education**

Remittances have also contributed to improving the quality of children’s education, eliminating illiteracy, improving access to better health facilities, providing good quality housing and enhancing the role of women in dealing with banks and other household matters. The overall social status of the households has shown a marked improvement in Doaba region. It has been observed that emigration has, in some cases, changed the attitude and behaviour of dependents, especially regarding the education of the children of emigrant workers. Children get large amounts of money for their education. However, there are cases where children of emigrant workers have used their fathers’ earnings to educate themselves, with a few even moving to colleges in urban areas to pursue higher and professional education. The impact of emigration on the education of children have been assessed in two ways. First, the type of schooling of children of emigrant households. It has been observed that the type of schooling of emigrant’s children was different from those households where no one has emigrated. Emigrants were more conscious about the quality of education of their children large number of emigrants reported that they send their children to the model schools who charge heavy in the form of admission
charges as well as tuition fee for teaching English. The children of other families generally go to the government schools. The type of schooling of the children depends upon the economic conditions of their parents and dalits are still poor compared to the other caste groups. Therefore the majority (97 percent) of the students in the government schools belongs to the dalit community (Garg, 2012).

Secondly, the youth also prefers to take up the course such as IELTS, nanny, nursing, beautician etc which can help them moving abroad as students. This is due to the advice received from their relatives abroad. Tremendous educational institutions have opened in these areas for such courses. Another observation is that some of the dalit teenagers prefer to get education only up to matriculation level; it is because the certificate of matriculation contains the date of birth of students which helps him for getting a new passport.

6.13 A Culture of Emigration in Doaba

Since 1970 Punjab has been continuously witnessing emigration to the Middle East and it has a profound influence on the local culture and perceptions of people living in villages of Doaba. International emigrants have often become role models in emigrant sending areas. It is found that emigration has affected the use and knowledge of Arabic and English in rural Doaba. On the other hand, this has also created higher consciousness, pride and affection with the mother tongue. Moreover, emigration is said to influence local tastes and styles, which is said to become particularly visible in the construction of style houses and villas by emigrants. Judge (2010a) in his study of Hoshiarpur district said, “international migration has become the part of culture, Gulf migration has also made an entry to the folk consciousness as is evident from the following couplets he mentioned:

*Bareen barsin khattan gaya si, khat ke liande rambe; Dubai lai gai lut ke sare ronki bande* (Dubai has snatched all the lively men from the village)

As it has been mentioned that emigration is not only a means to earn livelihood for the emigrants, it has become an identity symbol for the emigrants and their families left behind. It is observed that emigration has also an enormous impact on the marriage prospects of an individual in Doaba region, if we see the matrimonial in any of the newspaper in Punjab, no one forgets to mention the name of his/her caste and emigration status (if emigrated). Interestingly emigration to a particular country and status of emigrants (permanent citizen, student, work permit
worker or Gulf returned) are considered as the positive point of the individual and criteria of mate selection.

This influence is also noticeable in every stage of the arrangement of a marriage, in the modalities of the marriage, and in the changes in traditional wedding rituals and practice. The parents of the girl always prefer to marry their daughter with the emigrant, because they assume that she will sponsor her brothers and sisters after emigrating abroad. In dalit families, emigrant of developed countries are considered as first and emigrant from the Gulf are second choice for marrying their daughters.

6.14 Political Impact of Emigration

The end of economic dependency and enhancement of economic status through emigration also influence the political awareness among the respondents. During the field work it has been observed that dalits of Doaba region are more assertive about their political as well as social rights. A majority of them (94.33 per cent) in all districts of Doaba reported that they always prefer to cast their votes to the candidate of their own caste (Figure 6.12). The major cause behind this preference is now they are not economically dependent on the other dominating castes. Some of the respondents reported that traditionally higher caste landlord use to decide the preference of their dalit servant regarding his vote. The whole family of the dalit used to cast their votes to the candidate to whom their landlord supports. But now they can elect the candidate of their own choice.

Figure 6.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference to Cast Vote to the Own Community Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of the Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.B.S Nagar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalandhar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapurthala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoshiarpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (1.33 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (8 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (4 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (9.33 %)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In a nutshell, huge remittances to India from Gulf countries are the result of hard work by relatively poor people. Many of these emigrants working in the Gulf works under harsh conditions, and are often paid marginal wages but despite of this India is the single largest recipient country for remittances, followed by Mexico and Philippines. Remittance is a positive contribution to the GDP of India and it is the main source of earning foreign exchange and thereby adds to the foreign exchange reserves of the country. Due to the temporary nature of emigration and single male emigration to the Gulf countries, the per capita remittance of Gulf worker to India are estimated to be relatively higher than that of the workers in developed countries. The majority of the emigrants belonged to the lower income group families before their emigration. They send 70 to 80 per cent of their earnings as remittance from abroad and always try to save more and more money even by limiting their basic needs. The earnings of the workers depend upon the type of work or skill and duration of stay in the host country. A skilled worker earns more than unskilled and professionals earn more than skilled workers. Majority of the respondents send remittance through legal channels. Transactions through illegal methods are rarely used. Western union money transfer and banks are two popular methods of money transfer.

It has also been observed that remittances have not been sent regularly by the emigrants. Majority of the respondents used to send remittance after every two months. The study also indicates emigration has improved the living standard of the majority of respondents. Although a large number of the return emigrants did not invest in economically productive activities. But spent money on marriages, repaying loans, treatment of illness, and purchase of consumer durables like furniture, refrigerator, washing machines, televisions electrical appliances, etc. Some of the respondents have also invested productively which has changed the role of community in the traditional setup. Some of the late returnee have purchased agricultural land and started farming. They have purchased the land on which their forefather uses to work as landless peasants or attached labourers for the owners of lands owning caste. Now with the huge money from abroad dalits of Doaba region have started purchasing the agricultural land. Now Jats are losing their monopoly over the land. Very few of them have started their new business majority of them try
for their remigration to the developed countries. It was observed that those who acquired skill from abroad were not adaptable to local conditions. Many have to face difficulty to get new jobs in the local market. The skill that they acquired from abroad became irrelevant for them after return. A large number of respondents either invested on the construction of new houses or renovate their already existing houses. Majority of them who constructed new houses invested 6 to 10 laks rupees on construction.

It is clearly depicted from the case studies of Madan Lal, Gurmaj, Roshan Lal and Harbans Lal that the emigration had not only improved the household income, quality of life but also enhanced the social status of emigrants and their families. It has promoted the socio-economic status of the dalits emigrants. Although emigration to the Middle East is a relatively short time emigration but it has long time effects on the region. The positive impact of emigration can be seen throughout the Doaba region. Therefore, it can be said that emigration is positively associated with objective of poverty reduction and social status enhancement of the subaltern group of Punjab. It was also observed that majority of the respondents believed that their social status has improved through emigration. Another positive impact of emigration is that it has changed the traditional occupational structure in the Doaba region in which dalits use to work as Sepi/Seeries (attached labourer) on the land of Jats. Economic dependency of dalits on the land owning Jat caste has almost ended up. As a result dalits became more assertive about their social and political rights. An equal economic status also created mutual Jealousy and Antagonism among the dalits and higher castes.

Emigration has not only brought changes in the inter caste relation between higher and lower communities in the sending areas but also in the host countries. By virtue of having occupational skill and numerical strength, dalits among the Punjabis dominate in the Middle East compare to the higher castes who emigrated there as unskilled workers.

Majority of the emigrants had positive attitude toward their children education after emigration either male or female because education and modern values have eroded the gender discrimination. Emigrants like Gurmaj and Madan Lal have realized the value of education through their abroad experiences. The
majority of the respondents have enrolled their children in English medium model schools and spend huge money to pay their school and tuition fees. It has also been observed that emigration has changed the choice of youth regarding the courses of study they opt; those courses that can help them for moving abroad as students.

Emigration has also played a significant role in the enhancement of political awareness among the dalits of Doaba. A majority of the respondents reported that they always prefer to cast their votes to the candidate of their community. Dalits have also formed many groups for the welfare of the community. These groups are financially supported by the NRIs. Emigration has a profound influence on the local culture and perceptions of people living in villages in Dubai. Sudden change in the economic conditions of the dalits positively contributed for their identity construction. It has also made entry to the folk consciousness of dalits of the Doaba region. Improved economic conditions also made the dalits aware about their socio-political rights.