SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The studies on the international emigration of people generally focus either on its impact on the country of destination or country of origin and the economic consequences of emigration. Even the governments of sending and receiving countries also try to present the positive image of emigration. Often what get overlooked are the problems and challenges faced by the emigrants in the countries of destinations and socio-economic transformation in the country of origin as a result of emigration. The best examples of these phenomena are that the discussion on the problems and hardships of Gulf emigrants were missing in the last Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and Punjab's NRI Sammelan held in the first month of 2013. There are also tremendous studies that focus on the emigration of higher castes from Punjab to the developed countries. But no study focuses on the transient diaspora from Punjab to the Middle East countries which became the popular destinations for Punjabi Dalits after 1970s and in turn a major cause of enhancement in their socio-economic status in Punjab. This study is an attempt to fill the gap in the existing literature as it focuses not only on the neglected dimension of the Punjabi diaspora but also on the problems, hardships and discriminations faced by the Punjabi emigrants in the Middle East countries. It also highlights the transformation in the Dalit community as a result of emigration which acted as a major cause of their inclusion in the mainstream of Punjabi society.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study reaffirms the observation made by Judge and Bal (2009) that there has been lots of emigration of Dalits from the Doaba belt of Punjab towards the Gulf countries. The first finding of this study is that Chamars of the Doaba region dominated the number of emigrants among the total Dalit emigrants working in the Middle East. The major reason behind these phenomena is that Chamars also dominate numerically in the Doaba region as compared to the other castes. Due to the large scale undocumented and illegal emigration, however it is very difficult to give an exact figure regarding the number of emigrants from a region. As per the data published in the various annual reports of Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs Government of India, India is the world’s second largest overseas community next
to China. Presently there are over 27 million Indian people are residing outside the
country. It is also estimated that about 2.5 million Punjabis have gone abroad from
Punjab to the different countries of the world. As per the emigration of Punjabis to
the Middle East countries is concerned, in the last eleven years (2000 to 2010) 3,
22,425 workers have emigrated to the six Gulf (UAE, Kuwait, Sultanate of Oman,
Kingdom of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar) of the Gulf Corporation Council
(GCC) in the Middle East. The people from almost all dalit caste groups and
categories from the entire villages of the Doaba belt of Punjab have emigrated to the
Middle East countries. The trend of emigration towards the Gulf region was started
after the oil boom in 1973-74.

**Socio-Economic Background of Respondents**

When we look at the profile of our respondents, an interesting fact comes
into existence that unlike emigration to the developed countries where both males
and female immigrate, emigration from Punjab to the Gulf countries is exclusively
the emigration of males. All respondents who were interviewed for this study were
belonging to the single gender. In this sense this study is different from the studies
done from Kerala, Shri Lanka, Nepal, and Andhra Pradesh and Bihar from where
both male and female emigrate to the Gulf countries. Due to the nature of work and
requirements of the countries, emigration to the Gulf is the emigration of young
emigrants. A majority of the respondents (64.66 per cent) were found in the age
group of 18-38 years. The major cause of emigration of this age group is that it is
suitable for the labour work and required by the companies of the Middle East. Most
of the respondents were married. Although dalits from all castes have emigrated to
the Middle East but Chamars or Ad-Dharmis were dominating numerically among
the dalit emigrants. This finding reaffirms the findings of the pioneer studies
(Kessinger, 1973; Juergensmeyer, 1982; McLeod; 1986; Judge and Bal; 2009; Judge
2010) which show that Chamars/ Ad-dharmis are more mobile and emigrated in
majority as compare to the other caste groups among the Punjabi dalits.

Although dalit all over the state belong to the different religions, but it was
found that the majority of the respondents reported their religion as Hindu. It may be
because in the traditional society, castes came under the category of lower castes
were Hindus, later in the influence of Sikh religion and Christianity they converted
to the Sikhism and Christianity and in the influence of propaganda made by the
Bahujan Samaj Party and some other dalit activists some have converted to the Buddhism. Those who converted from Hinduism/Sikhism to the Christianity majority of them belong to the Valmikis or Majhbi caste.

It was interesting to note that some of the respondents were not sure about their religion due to their faith and beliefs in various religions e.g. they go to the gurudwara on every Sunday and on Masya (Moonless night), Punya (Full moon day), also worship goddess in the days of Navratras, and on every Thursday they light a lamp on the graves of Muslim saint whom they call “Peers” or “Takiyas” and also have faith on various Deras like Radhasawami, Dera Sachkhand Ballan, Dera Sacha Souda, Nirankari etc. Therefore during the fieldwork, it was also difficult for me to understand the religious orientations of the respondents.

Another finding is that the majority of the respondents belonged to the large size nuclear families, having 1-2 earners. A large proportion of respondents were heading the households. Therefore, a large proportion of their remittances had been used for the daily subsistence of the house. When they emigrated their wives used to run their houses.

Patterns, Trends and Transnational Networks of Emigration

The third chapter looks at the patterns and trends of emigration and the role of transnational networks in the process of emigration. It has been observed that over the past three decades, India has been a major labour-sending country to the Middle East with an estimated 3.3 million Indians working in the Gulf region by 2007. In these countries more than 95 per cent of India’s work force has been employed. While there have been significant annual fluctuations over the period. Since 2005 the number of Indians has grown in all Middle East countries, but the world economic recession has adversely affected the outflow of workers in this region after 2008. Therefore after 2008 a drastic downfall in the number of workers could be seen. A special feature of this emigration to the Middle East is that all foreign workers in the Gulf are temporary and will always remain as they are not entitled to become the citizens of these countries at any cost.

Similarly, a sizable proportion of emigrant workers have been emigrating from Punjab to these countries. Punjabi emigrants who are working in the Gulf countries as skilled or unskilled, almost all of them are engaged with the
construction work in different forms, but a majority of them work as mason and carpenter. Majority of them emigrated there in the last decade. They are spatially mobile as about one third of them have visited two and more countries in their life. Data in the present study shows that a majority of the respondents have chosen the United Arab Emirate as their destination where about more than half of the respondents were emigrated. They also have a sizable proportion in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Interestingly unlike emigration from the other states of country Punjabis have shown less interest in Saudi Arabia. Despite the ignorance and conditions of the host countries more than half of the respondents have spent more than five years in the country of their emigration. Almost all the respondents were young when they emigrated. They were from the age which was more productive and suitable for the rough conditions of work in the Middle East. Due to global economic crises the respondents in the present study have been affected badly as a result majority of them have lost their jobs and returned permanently. Due to the pleasant working condition in the developed countries it is the dream of every temporary worker in the Middle East to emigrate to the developed country. But only due to poor economic conditions in the home they have to remain in the Middle East because emigration to the Middle East is relatively cheaper than developed countries.

Today Dalits diaspora community has emerged as a distinctive transnational community in the Middle East. The emigrants in the Gulf have strong socioeconomic, cultural and political networks, involving their homeland, and their kith and kin around the Middle East. It is obvious that, though the Punjabis are separated by distance (as Punjab is divided in the three cultural zones), they remain linked to one another through ties of real or imaginary kinship, blood relations, shared resources, and cultural exchanges, as a result they create a strong network system that facilitates emigration to a particular region of the Middle East. Punjabi dalits diaspora in the Middle East has created strong links with the homeland and with the community members who have already become the part of diaspora. These links provide information to the other community members regarding the new opportunities abroad and always encourage them to move with them. These links also help members of the community in the form of visa help, and initial help in the time of first emigration and by creating a homely environment in the host country.
Summary and Conclusions

is very important for the diasporic community because in the absence of these strong ties of network emigration process cannot move ahead.

Transnational networks of emigration have played very important role in the process of emigration of dalit community to the Middle East. This network worked in four ways. First, it is the major source of the information for job prospects at abroad is friends, relatives and recruiting agents and family members. Secondly it provides help during first time emigration in getting the Visa and jobs. Thirdly it also supports newly arrived emigrants for getting accommodation and helped them in finding jobs etc. Lastly, it further creates chain system and extends the network by helping relatives, family members, for getting a work permit.

Social Exclusion and Discrimination in the Middle East

The fourth chapter highlights a totally new dimension of the Gulf migration, which was overlooked by the Indian scholars as well as by the Indian government. The findings of this study show that Indian emigrants in all the GCC states (UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar) belong to a socially and culturally excluded group. The governments of these countries do not encourage them to mix socially and culturally with the nationals. Their economic condition, low paid occupations became the major causes of their exclusion in the Middle East societies. In all the countries of the Middle East, locally and nationally, emigrants are stigmatized as poor, uncivilized and threat to economy, culture, and national security. As a result many emigrants remain at the margins of society, with serious consequences for social cohesion. One of the most disturbing factor in all the Gulf countries is that social exclusion has, in many places, come to be seen as a ‘normal condition’ for immigrants. It is important to understand social exclusion as a cumulative process, in which localized processes in various sub-sectors of society (the labour market, social rights, housing, health, education, etc.) interact to cause exclusion from society. Emigrants are not allowed to participate in economic life and are excluded from the social, cultural and political spheres. Restrictions on family re-unification have deprived emigrant workers of the right to family life. Host countries have maintained double standards in their policies towards highly skilled and professional emigrants on the one hand and the less skilled workers on the other. The professionals are well integrated in the host societies while the environment for the less skilled, and unskilled workers are relatively unfriendly.
The presence of emigrant workers in the Gulf countries has been seen as dissolving the culture, language and threat to the traditional values and customs of the nationals. But in spite of this Gulf countries are totally dependent upon the foreign workers as they constitute majority in the host countries and have sizable proportion in the workforce in all the Middle East countries. Thus the governments of the Middle East countries have adopted a policy of separation in the form of various types of exclusions. The major aim of social exclusion and xenophobia is to avoid the creation of a parallel society where the communication between nationals and immigrants hardly exists. Respondents reported that they were not excluded as individuals, but as groups, but still they were surviving because it was among them a very strong formal or informal social network exists and because of same nationality they keep contacts and mutually help each other to create a living space in the host society.

**Problems and Challenges Faced By the Emigrant Workers in the Middle East**

The present study contests the observation made by Zachariah, Prakash, and Irudaya Rajan (2002) that the workers, who have proper visas and work contracts specifying the working conditions, do not face serious problems in the host countries of the Gulf region. But drawing on several data sources, including a review of existing literature, emigration data from secondary sources, and primary surveys of return emigrants, show that the working and living conditions of Punjabi workers in almost all the countries of the Middle East are very poor. Majority of them were engaged with the 3D (dirty, dangerous and degrading) jobs that were categorised as lower-status jobs, and were not accepted by the native born population. The natives always avoid doing these jobs because these jobs are low paid and considered as low prestigious and cheap. Respondents reported that they were vulnerable to various forms of discrimination, such as low wages, racism and harassment, fear of deportation etc. The findings of the study show that even the condition of irregular workers was worse than the regular workers. The regular workers used to enjoy some facilities such as health insurance, mess facility, accommodation and job security by the companies in which they were working.

There are many cases in which a regular worker became irregular. Many respondents reported that the majority of the irregular workers in the Middle East are
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those who have overstayed their visa for different reasons. They have come legally in the host country through work contract but due to different reasons they left their companies and have to work illegally without any sponsor. Second types of irregular workers are those who entered the country on a visit or through tourist visa and started working without proper documents or getting work permit. They have neither used any illegal means for emigration nor smuggled through any illegal way. A majority of the workers left their companies without informing their employer because their companies do not pay their salaries regularly or generally they are low paid and sometimes leave the company because of poor accommodation and poor quality of mess food provided by the companies.

Various case studies in this chapter highlight the problems and challenges that emigrants faced in the Middle East and show how emigrants who emigrated under the Kafala system have been exploited by the private companies or by their sponsors. Even the response of the government official was not in their favour. Due to lack of knowledge of local language, illiteracy and poor economic conditions they were exploited by the private companies in the country of emigration. They paid huge money for their emigration, worked hard under inhuman condition; in spite of this they could not do anything for their families.

Major Problems Faced by the Emigrants in the Middle East

a) Employment agreement some time ignored on the arrival of the labour in the Gulf countries and skilled worker are forced to work as unskilled workers.

b) In the entire GCC countries emigrants do not have any social and human rights which is the main cause of their slavery conditions. Irregular emigrants do not have even some basic human rights such as protection against forced labour, protection against discrimination at work, protection against sexual harassment, protection against racial and ethnic harassment, access to public Medical/health services etc which are essential for a human being to survive.

c) Emigrant workers in the Gulf countries often are trapped in horrible living and working conditions. Working hours are much longer than the generally recognised 8 hours work day.

d) Medical facilities are inadequate and in some cases almost nonexistent. Generally health treatment has been covered under the health insurance but
the company refuses to pay for their repatriation costs, as was stipulated in
their contracts. Generally workers themselves had to pay for their treatments
in case of illness. They also do not get compensation in case of illness,
workplace injuries and death. Even the irregular workers are not allowed to
take medicine and health treatment from any private or government
hospitals, in case of illness they have to depend upon their legal status
friends and relatives.

e) Generally companies in the Gulf countries provide food to the workers. In
some cases workers are forced to eat unhygienic, tasteless poor quality of
food. They always have to eat stale food. The workers eat breakfast and
lunch cooked in the last night and dinner cooked in the noon. They had to eat
food which has been always outdated, tasteless, unhygienic, and smelly due
to high temperature. Very few companies provide fresh food to their
workers.

f) Several months of work may have to be devoted initially to the resettlement
of debts incurred in meeting the fee extorted from them by their recruiting
agents in India

g) Salaries are often not paid when due, sometimes not paid at all for several
months towards the end of the contract period, resulting in workers being
repatriated without full payment of their dues.

h) Work permit fee (Iqama) is deducted from their meagre salaries.

i) The employers often do not receive their legitimate overtime dues.

j) Transportation arrangements of the group of labourers from their camps to
their worksites are often unsatisfactory.

k) Though a return passage to India after two years in the Gulf is expected to
be a standard clause in job contracts, leave is often refused or postponed
when demanded.

l) There are few recreational opportunities for the labour in definitely class of
our migrants, concern in family left behind in India, difficult working and
living conditions, insecurity of jobs has often led to depression. Sometimes
workers have to work in the remote areas in deserts with minimal or no
contact with the outside world which often result psychological problems
m) Workers who want to return home on completion of their contract, or due to unforeseen emergency like sickness or death in the family often find that exit formalities are inordinately delayed.

n) After return in India the illiterate workers often with little or no facilities available to them are often harassed and exploited by the customs authorities at Indian airports.

**Transformation after Emigration**

Despite the hardships, the positive aspects of Gulf emigration cannot be ignored. Although many emigrants working in the Gulf, work under harsh conditions, and are often paid marginal wages, but despite of this, India is a single largest recipient country for remittances, followed by Mexico and Philippines. Indian has maintained its first position in terms of remittance receiving country for the past one decade. The share of Gulf emigration in terms of remittance is higher than developed countries. The remittance rose from US $ 15.8 billion in 2001-2002 to US$ 69.9 billion in 2012-13. The findings of the present study show that the workers who generate this huge remittance generally come from economically poor background families. This study shows that a majority of the respondents (79.33 per cent) belonged to the families whose monthly income was between 2000 to 5000 which was not sufficient to meet even the basic needs of their families. After emigration the emigrant can earn many times higher than what they used to earn before emigrating. It not only helps the emigrant to improve his socio-economic status but it also contributes for the development of the country. They try to curtail their consumption expenditure so that they can remit larger sums to their families. They used to use only 20 per cent of their earnings to meet their basic needs at abroad. 83.33 per cent of the respondents reported that they used to spend 2000 to 3000 rupees per month on their daily needs. The earnings of the workers depend upon the type of work or skill and duration of stay in the host country. The professionals earn more than skilled workers and skilled workers earn more than unskilled. It was found that generally emigrants did not send remittance regularly to their families. It is because of their low salaries and to save the cost of money transfer they used to remit money after every two months. Some other factors were
also responsible for irregular remittance such as delay in getting salaries, the legal or illegal status of the emigrants etc.

It was also found that majority of the respondents (97.67 per cent) used legal methods for money transfer. The popular methods of remittance transfer were Western Union Money Transfer and banks. Remittance through the post office and illegal channels are losing their popularity among the emigrants. Emigrants believe that legal channels are safe, quick and reliable as compare to the illegal channels.

As per the use of remittances is concerned, it was found that majority of the respondents did not use remittance productively, but spent money on marriages, repaying loans, treatment of illness, and purchase of consumer durables like furniture, refrigerator, washing machines, televisions electrical appliances, etc. for their homes. It was also found that 96 per cent of respondents said 30 to 40 per cent of their remittances were primarily used for the household subsistence. A large number of them (94 per cent) have repaid debit that they borrowed at the time of their emigration to meet the travel cost. In spite of this the productive use of the remittance brought significant change in the role of community in the traditional setup. Some of the respondents (16.33 per cent) have purchased agricultural land and started farming. They have purchased the land on which their forefather used to work as landless peasants or attached labourers for the owners of lands owning caste. Because in some villages, however, Jats (Land owning caste) are selling their lands as there is no one to take care of it, when the whole family emigrate to the developed countries, or when only one or two members of the family (generally old parents) are left behind in the village or some time they sell their land to raise funds for their emigration. As a result traditionally land owning caste Jats are now losing their monopoly over the land. There are 59.66 per cent of the respondents who had purchased plots for house construction or for sale. It was also found that only those started their small business in the village (generally grocery shops), who were not able to re-emigrate to any country due to various reasons such as age, poor health conditions, family responsibilities etc. those who were fit for emigration were trying to move to the developing countries by using their remittance.

It was found that a majority of the respondents have either constructed their new modern style house or renovated their existing house. The huge money was invested in the construction of a house. A majority of the respondents have invested
between 6 to 10 lacks rupees on the construction of houses. The amount invested on the construction varies from the earnings of the respondents and their duration of emigration. It was observed that late returnees had invested more compare to the short term returnees.

Some case studies in the sixth chapter show that how emigrants have created a chain system of emigration by sending their family members to the Middle East and developed countries. In the present study 50 per cent of the respondents had spent a major part of their earnings on the emigration of their family members.

It was also observed that the standard of living of emigrant’s families has improved due to their emigration. The standard of living of the families was measured in terms of presence of luxury items, kind of housing, use of latest technology and the lifestyle of the respondents’ families. Most of the family members have purchased luxury items after the emigration of their family members. It was observed that family members of the emigrants like to show off by flaunting costly and luxury bikes/ motorcycles, jewellery, cars etc and spent money on building spacious houses with modern facilities such as air conditions, food processor, refrigerator, computers and laptops etc.

The village and caste wise variation in living standard was also observed. It was found that the standard of living in almost all the villages and castes have increased, except in case where the emigrants like a case of Baljit Singh, returned after a short period of time and sell property/ land to repay the loans taken by them for their emigration. It was also found that emigrants were not spending only for personal uses but they have also donated for the improvement of community and religious institutions in their villages. 61 per cent of respondents reported that they donated money for social welfare. More than 50 per cent of the donors donated to the religious institution for the construction and renovation or maintenance of buildings (Guru Ravidass Mandir, Bhagwan Valmiki Bhawans etc) or arrangements of festivals and “Langar” (community kitchen or the practice of cooking and eating together, sitting in a row irrespective of caste distinctions) etc. in their villages. They also donated to the education of children to the schools in the village, and also to the welfare organizations working in the villages or areas.

Social transformation was measured in terms of improvement in the social status of the family and emigrants, response of the higher caste after emigrant’s
return, perception of the respondents for their past and present status, inter caste relation after emigration, impact on education and transformation etc. Social transformation was also assessed by measuring the inter caste relations in the host countries and cultural changes occurred due to emigration.

Another most influential impact of emigration was seen on the inter caste relation in the Doaba region. It has been observed that emigration has demolished the interdependency of various caste groups of traditional society by creating new avenues of jobs for the dalits. For dalits, emigration literally constituted liberation and has been their main avenue of upward socio-economic mobility. Emigration and remittances have enabled the (partial) emancipation of individuals belonging to the Dalit community. Throughout the Doaba region, emigration has offered new opportunities to earn an external income independent of the constraints set by traditional society. Traditionally landless, and hence powerless, dalits are now earning wages that allow them to buy land, property, increasing influence in local affairs. The end of dependency was the first step towards the social status enhancement of dalit community. Emigration has changed the social face of dalit community in Doaba region that further become the cause of better life style and also acquire more wealth in the society. It has been observed that emigration has not affected all emigrants equally; only late returnees could enhance their socio-economic status compare to the short term returnees. It was found from the various case studies in the sixth chapter that although majority of the emigrants were engaged with the low prestigious jobs in their host countries, but their families have started refusing low status jobs such as Sepi/ Seeris (attached labour in agriculture) for the land owning castes or as a maid servant in the houses of higher castes. Majority of the respondents (81.66 per cent) reported a better status after emigration. On the other hand 90.66 per cent of them believe that before emigration their socio-economic status in the caste hierarchy was low. The main causes of their low position in the society that they reported were poverty and illiteracy which were removed through the emigration.

It was found that emigration of dalit community has also affected the inter caste relations in the villages of Doaba region. We have seen both positive as well as negative effects during the field work. Emigrations of dalits have abolished the Jajmani relations in which dalits were dependent for their day to day needs on the
Summary and Conclusions

mercy of their landlords. As Karl Marx said structure always shapes the superstructure. It was found that by virtue of improved 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 compare to the other parts of the state.

Emigration has not only contributed to the economic well-being of the Dalit community, it has also helped them to construct their caste identity which ended up the tendency among the Chamars to hide their caste name. The majority of the respondents reported a positive impact of emigration on the inter caste relations which includes mutual respect between the community members, equal status etc. A majority of respondents (38.66 per cent) said socio-cultural and political participation of their community has increased after their return. It was found that emigration has significantly contributed for the social inclusion of dalit community in the mainstream of Punjabi society. The other side of the coin is the negative aspect of emigration. It was found the in some villages mutual jealousy and feeling of antagonism among the higher and lower caste groups have increased.

This study also highlights the inter caste relations in the host countries. It was found that due to numerical strength and hegemony on the skills dalits dominate among the Punjabis working in the Middle East countries. They enjoyed higher salaries and better living conditions as compare to the unskilled higher castes. It was also found that friction between the Chamars and Jat castes in Punjab also had effected the inter caste relation in the host countries. After the incidence of Talhan violence on June, 5, 2003 and murder of saint Ramanand in Austria on May 24, 2009, Chamars emigrants like Punjab have constructed their own gurudawaras separate from the other caste groups. There are some cases in UAE where Guru Gurugranth sahib has been replaced with the Amrit Bani Granth of Dera Sachkhand, Ballan by the dalits.

Looking at the impact of emigration on the education of children, it was found that emigration had affected the education in two ways. First, the type of schooling and the second was the choice of courses of studies. It has been observed that the type of schooling of emigrants’ children was different from those of no emigrated households. 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 heavily in the forms of admission charges as well as tuition fee for teaching English. The children of other families generally go to the government run schools. Second the youth also prefers to take up the course such as IELTS, nanny, nursing, beautician etc which can help them for moving abroad as students. Even the attitudes of the teenagers have changed. 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.

These remittances have not only helped in raising the standard of living of the households from where a member has emigrated, but also helped in the development of the areas from where emigration is quite high. The impact of international migration can also be seen in the public sector. The best example of this contribution is that, the government had to construct two international airports in Punjab namely Guru Ramdass International Airport, Rajasansi Amritsar and Shaheed Bhagat Singh International Airport Chandigarh for the convenience of emigrants. The development can also be noticed in the commercial sector. The growth in the number of commercial complexes, jewellery outlets, hotels and hospitals during 1975 to present with international standards proves the contribution of international migration to the development of public sector.

CONCLUSIONS

Some characteristics such as sex, religion and year of birth did not change with emigration or under any other normal circumstance. They are relatively fixed characteristics. Emigration to the Middle East countries was typically male’s emigration. Most of them were married at the time of fieldwork. A majority of the respondents were from the productive age group and relatively young and belonged to the large size nuclear families. Emigration has affected the authority structure in the family institution. It was found that female headed households are increasing in case of emigration of the head of the family.

Among the dalits, Chamars dominate numerically among the emigrants in the Middle East. The second largest group is Valmikis. Interestingly only few castes among the dalits have emigration culture. A majority of them reported their religion as Hindu. Findings show that frequency to change the country of emigration among
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the Punjabi emigrants working in the Middle East is higher. About one third of the respondents have visited more than one country of the Middle East for employment. Further UAE is a popular destination among the Punjabis to seek better job opportunities.

Poverty and unemployment were the two main reasons behind the emigration and the choice of country of emigration. In the present study Dalits could not emigrate to the developed countries like Canada, USA and Europe because they had no resources to manage the high travel cost, where emigration to the Gulf countries is relatively cheaper. Therefore the choice of destination depends upon the economic status of the family, as those who are already affluent tend to emigrate to the developed countries while those from poor background prefer Gulf countries. Thus we can say poverty and unemployment acted as push factors for the Punjabi dalits to emigrate to the Middle East countries.

Transnational networks of emigrants had played very important role in the process of emigration of dalits to the Middle East. It is a major cause and consequence of emigration of dalits from Doaba region. The study found that although about more than half of the emigrants had been recruited through the travel agents, but the rest had used friends and relatives network for getting a work permit. Even those who emigrated through agents were dependent upon the transnational networks for arranging the travel cost and initial help for settlement at abroad. The transnational networks have helped the respondents in being in the state of high well being. Thus we can say the strong community sentiments and transnational networks are very useful in the settlement and emigration of Dalits.

Most of emigrants paid all the travel fees due in advance. About more than half of the returnees who went abroad through travel agents financed their emigration either from their savings or by selling family property, jewellery or taking a loan from the money lenders or relatives. Borrowing money was nominal among those who went abroad through transnational network. The most common sources of loans were friends and relatives to meet the cost of emigration. No one got financial assistance either from the Government or from the banks.

Punjabi emigrant workers in all the Middle East countries are socially, culturally and spatially excluded in the Gulf countries. These countries have adopted a policy of separation to exclude the foreign workers because emigrants are
stigmatized as poor, uncivilized and threat to the national economy, culture, religious beliefs and national security. They have been treated as just disposable workers who can be thrown any time to their countries. They have to face lots of discriminations by the nationals of host countries and governments with regards to rights, benefits. In some countries of the Middle East they do not have even some basic human rights which are essential for a human being to survive. They always become victims of social exclusion, which result number of restrictions and discrimination against them.

There are lots of differences between the problems of regular and irregular workers in the Gulf countries. The conditions of the irregular worker are worse than the regular workers. The irregular workers have not any political, social and even human rights in the Gulf countries. Fear of detection keeps irregular emigrant workers away from even legitimately available services because they know that if they caught they will be punished and deported to India. They are not able to secure protection for themselves against hazards to their health and safety, join unions or organize themselves for collective bargaining, obtain fair wages, ask for compensation in case of injury or illness, or have any employment security.

The living conditions of all the foreign workers are not same. Professionals are provided with reasonably good accommodation, health care facilities, and working conditions they are also well integrated in the host societies. But the working and living conditions of the majority of the semi-skilled and unskilled Punjabi workers are extremely poor. The accommodation for construction workers is commonly referred to as labour camps. These camps have inadequate sewerage and ventilation, substandard drinking water etc. Generally companies violated hygiene and safety rules prescribed by the governments. In these camps, workers typically live six-to-eight persons per room. The condition of the irregular workers is worse than the regular workers. They rely on social networks to arrange housing. Generally they are crowded into an unofficially rented single room apartment with unlimited immigrants. They live in the overcrowded small rooms with more than 10 to 20 persons in a room using single toilet which remain unclean for weeks and without kitchen facility.

Most of the Punjabi workers are engaged with the skilled or unskilled jobs which are considered fit only for non-nationals and rejected by the nationals. The
foreign workers are subject to substandard and often inhumane working and living conditions. Most of the emigrant workers work more than 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. Sometime they have to work outside when the temperature exceeds 44 degrees Celsius (112 degrees Fahrenheit). Due to heat, exhaustion, and inadequate safety requirements pose serious health and safety problems for the workers. Emigrants are often forced to work longer hours than those indicated in the contract they signed in Punjab, and many reported not receiving additional wages for these additional (overtime) hours.

Punjabi emigrant workers prefer to use legal channels for sending money to their family members. Most popular methods that they use are Western Union Money transfer and banks. These methods are considered as most reliable and safe as compared to the traditional methods like *Hundi System* and remittance through friends etc.

The major uses of remittances were seen on non productive items such as new construction or maintenance of their households in Punjab, paying outstanding debts that they borrowed to meet the travel cost, buying consumer durables and household subsistence, marriage of family members etc. But despite of this an interesting phenomenon observed regarding the use of remittance was that land ownership pattern in the rural Doaba region is changing. Dalits of the Doaba region who were traditionally landless and were placed at the bottom of caste hierarchy are now purchasing the agricultural land and property due to the remittances from abroad. Many land owning castes have sold their land in the villages after emigration of one or more family member to the developed countries. Emigration had improved the household income, quality of life and promoted the socio-economic status of the Dalit emigrants in Punjab. Therefore, emigration to the Middle East Countries is positively associated with objective of poverty reduction and social status enhancement in the dalit communities.

Emigration of dalits to the Middle East also resulted in the advancement of quality of education. Most of the emigrants have used the money for better education of their children. Emigrants reported that they send their children to the private model schools. Those courses are getting popularity which helps the students in emigration abroad. Another major change has been the education of girls, which the emigrants have promoted. Because generally emigrants do not wish to marry
uneducated girls. Generally families of the girls expect that if their girl gets married with an emigrant she will help the other family members for their emigration.

Dalit diaspora philanthropy also played important role for the improvement of dalit community. Emigrants send a handsome amount of remittance in the form of donation to the religious institution for construction, renovation, maintenance of these places. Donations have also been given to the other organizations such as NGOs, educational institution and community functions etc.

Emigration has also breakdown of the ancient caste based hierarchies in the Doaba region of 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. Emigration can be seen as a threat to traditional forms of social structure, hereditary inequality based on caste, kinship, and land ownership which were the main causes of lower position of the dalit emigrants in the society. As a result of this Doaba region has become the hub of dalit assertion and reform movements. Dalits of the Doaba region started reconstruction of their caste identity equal to the higher castes.

Emigration has also changed the inter caste relation in Doaba region. It has both positive as well as negative impacts. Improvement in the economic status of dalit families abolished the traditional *Jajmani system* in which dalits were dependent upon the land owning higher caste for their day to day needs and used to work with them as attached labourers. Therefore emigration has positively contributed for the creation of parallel society. Another positive impact of emigration is mutual respects between the higher and lower communities have increased as a result socio cultural participation of dalits has also increased. But on the other hand mutual jealousy and feeling antagonism has also increased. The best example of this friction is the Jats vs. Chamars battle which can be seen on YouTube.

Emigration has become the part of Punjabi culture. It is not only a means to earn livelihood for the emigrants. It has become an identity and a status symbol for the emigrants and their families left behind. It has enormous impacts on all aspects of emigrant’s life such as marriage, religion, rituals, politics, caste and economy etc.