



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMPUTER APPLICATION AND MANAGEMENT

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RETURN MIGRATION TRENDS OF SOFTWARE PROFESSIONALS AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF INDIA

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ABSTRACT

In past few years the links between return migration of highly skilled professionals has been getting attention not only by sending country but also by various national and international organizations. This paper discusses the trends of software professional return migrants and its impact on the socio-economical status of India. In this paper we explained the type and nature of return migration, and the reasons of return migration from United States (U.S) to India. The paper also includes the recommendation for further action to be taken by host country to have more positive impact of these return migrants and also to motivate other migrants to come back to homeland.

KEY WORDS

Return Migration, Software Service Export, Skilled Labour Migration.

INTRODUCTION

Return migrant is one who has worked for at least one year in a country other than his/her usual residence and has returned back to India, either temporarily or permanently. These migrants can include those persons also who are constantly traveling between India and abroad but their permanent residency is in India. In recent years there has been growing interest in exploring the dynamics and links between return migration of highly skilled Indian professionals (IT, R&D and Education sectors) and development not only by sending country but also by various national and international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), migrant associations and the private sector. The reason of this attention towards return migration is due to the positive impact on the economy of parent country. They also bring additional skill learnt abroad which increases their productivity at home. The additional productivity they gain from their experience abroad can have a profound impact on the resulting brain drain obtained.

But the benefits that highly skilled return migrants can provide for their countries of origin have been both grossly underestimated and largely neglected by most sending countries governments. The Indian government, for example, is slowly realizing and seeking ways to exploit the potential benefit Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), a group numbering over twenty million globally, can have on Indian's economic development and growth.

Return migration, whether temporary or permanent, can contribute to reducing the negative impacts of human capital outflows for countries of origin. Return migration may not only replenish and enrich the human capital of origin but it can also contribute to the transfer of technology and of scientific, technical and economic expertise as well as political, social and cultural exchanges. Other potential benefits of return migration result from capital inflow and productive investment associated with returnees.

According to Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011 of World Bank, 11.4 million people from India went abroad in 2010 and 5.4 million came into the country, making India number 10 in the global list of nations attracting the most immigrants and number 2 in Asia. There is extremely limited data on the return migration except when it is on an organized basis because no country has a monitoring system to capture return of nationals who have been employed abroad.

TYPES AND NATURE OF RETURN MIGRATION

Benefits of return migration depend on a number of factors such as the type and nature of return migration, which obviously affect the impact and can be discussed as:

- **Motives or intentions:** According to Cerese 1974, there are four categories of reasons: (a) failure (b) conservatism (c) retirement and (d) innovation. The last category – return of innovation- is the most relevant to the development of the homeland.
- **Time pattern:** Occasional returns, seasonal returns, temporary returns and permanent returns (King 2000).
- **Timing of return:** The timing of return is crucial for several reasons. If people return after a reasonable period of time, they are better equipped because of additional qualifications and skills, work experience, accumulated resources, and social capital (networks and linkages with those back in the host country). A person who returns after a brief spell abroad may not be able to offer much benefit to the home country in the form of diverse forms of the capital (human, financial and social).
- **Nature of return:** Assisted or voluntary.

Having explored the type and nature of return migration now let us see the factors that are most important for different type of migrants, looking at the age, professional experience and skill set, and the characteristics of the countries they come from. Table 1 shows the motivational factors driving the particular type of return migration.

TABLE 1: FACTOR DRIVING RETURN MIGRATION

Motivational Factor	Particular relevance to which type of migrants
1. <i>General improvement of the situation in the homeland (e.g economic, political):</i> The push factor that motivated the migrant to depart has declined in significance	Relevant to most skilled migrants
2. <i>Feeling of belonging to one's culture and society:</i> Some migrant's high degree of attachment and their desire to develop their country makes them want to return	Skilled migrants from low-income countries who tend to feel a great sense of commitment to their country's development; young professionals and students with no family ties in the destination country.
3. <i>The intention to leave for a short period, usually to achieve a specific objective:</i> To return after completing contract or once a goal has been reached (e.g mortgage investment, tuition fees or a new business in homeland).	Highly skilled migrants (e.g consultants) holding a short-term contract, entrepreneurs, and those who leave family including spouses and children behind.

RETURN MIGRATION TRENDS OF SOFTWARE PROFESSIONALS TO INDIA

The software industry is the motor, driving the upswing in the Indian technology sector. By almost any standards, the growth of India's software exports has been phenomenal which is attributed to the growing respect for Indian software industry in the international market continued rise in the offshore services, quality services, timely delivery, entry into new market, Y2K data conversion business, international linkages and also due various steps taken by the government to promote software export such as simplifying procedures, tax concessions, establishment of software technology parks, more liberal investment policies, as well as a number of comparative advantages India posses such as 2nd largest pool of scientific and skilled manpower which is also English speaking, low cost of labor, investment friendly economic climate and policy, location time difference with the western world enabling round the clock development, building up of national level institutions.

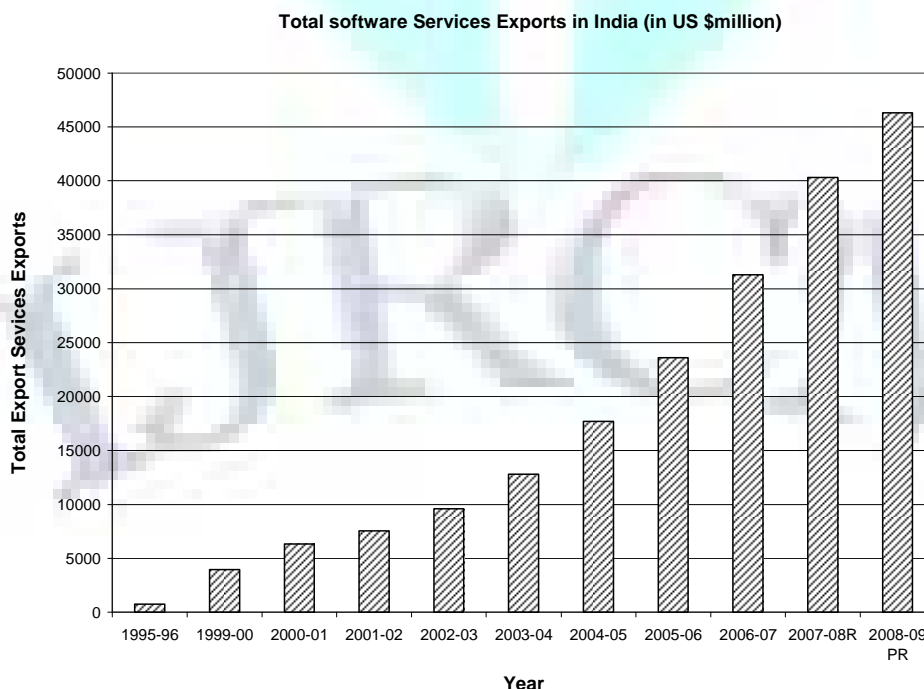
According to RBI Monthly Bulletin and NASSCOM, 2010, exports of software and IT-enabled services (ITES) increased to US\$ 46.3 billion in 2008-2009 as compared to US \$ 40.3 billion during 2007-2008 as shown in table 2 and figure1. With the continued buoyancy in software exports, on an average, they constituted about 44 percent of total services exports of India during 2001-02 to 2008-09. The Indian IT-BPO industry, which experienced exceptional growth benefiting from growing globalization, has emerged over time as a key sector of the economy in terms of contribution to the growth, export earnings, investment, employment and overall economic and social development.

TABLE 2: SOFTWARE SERVICES EXPORT IN INDIA (IN US \$ MILLION)

Year	IT Services Exports	ITES-BPO Exports	Total Software Services Exports
1995-96	754	--	754
1999-2000	3397	565	3962
2000-01	5411	930	6341
2001-02	6061	1495	7556
2002-03	7100	2500	9600
2003-04	9200	3600	12800
2004-05	13100	4600	17700
2005-06	17300	6300	23600
2006-07	22900	8400	31300
2007-08R	29400	10900	40300
2008-09PR	33,600	12700	46300

R: Revised PR: Partially Revised BPO: Business Process Outsourcing
 Source: NASSCOM and RBI Monthly Bulletin March 2010

FIGURE 1: TOTAL SOFTWARE EXPORTS IN INDIA (IN US \$ MILLION) FROM 1995-96 TO 2008-2009 (AS PER THE DATA GIVEN IN TABLE2)

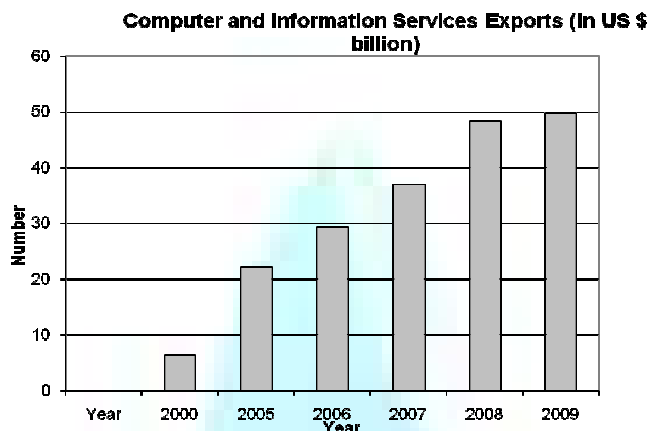


Despite the global economic and financial crisis and related pressures on external demand, exports of the software and IT-enabled services exhibited a steady growth of around 15 percent during 2008-2009. As reported in balance of payments statistics year book 2009, India has continued to be ranked first in the

exports of computer and information services in the international economy since 2005. According to a recent NASSCOM report titled "IT-BPO sector in India-strategic review 2010", software export revenues are around US\$ 49.7 billion in 2009-2010, registering a growth of about 7 percent over the previous year, and contributing about 67 percent of the total IT-BPO revenues.

India topped the list accounting for more than half of global market in technology and business process outsourcing (around US\$ 47 billion global sourcing revenue). NASSCOM expects IT services to grow by 4.2 percent in 2011 as companies coming out of recession tend to harness the need for information technology to create competitive advantage.

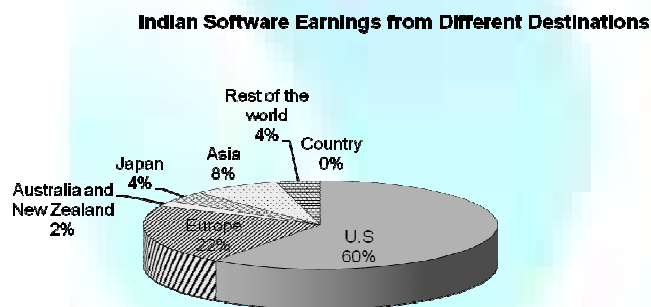
FIGURE 2: VARIATION OF COMPUTER AND INFORMATION SERVICES EXPORTS (IN US \$ BILLION) OF INDIA FROM 2000 TO 2009.



(Source: RBI Monthly Bulletin March 2010)

The software relationship between India and the US is particularly significant. Just as Indian is becoming the largest supplier of software labor to the US both in terms of body shopping and of online labor, the US has turned out to be the largest sources of the foreign exchange earnings for India as shown in the figure 3.

FIGURE 3: INDIAN SOFTWARE EARNINGS FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD.



According to a spokesperson for the National Association of the software and service companies (NASSCOM) "if the Indian software engineers were to go back home, the U.S IT industry would collapse the next morning". The success of IT in India is attributed due to a combination of the two factors, one being economic and other political (Heeks 1996, Bajpai and Shastri 1998). Success due to the economic factor is based upon: 1. the competitive advantage of the Indian IT economy resulting from a combination of low labor costs (which are approximately a quarter of level); 2. a high level of qualification of the employees.

The political factors which include the changes in government policies are the sector factor for the economic boom of IT in India. These are: 1. the fundamental change from the self-reliance strategy to an open market economy at the beginning of the 1990s (Wagner 1997); 2. the subsidization of IT as one of the five key sectors within the Indian national economy (since the mid-1980s). In addition to these two factors, a third factor connected to the social migration may be responsible for the success of IT in India. A large portion of top-level management positions in the Indian software sector is filled by Indians who left the country and emigrated (mainly to the USA) in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (former brain drain Indians). At the beginning of the 1990s, after the introduction of the Indian economic liberalization policy many of these elites built up networks or enterprises in India either by remigrating to their home country or-when staying in the US-through branches of their US companies. In 2000, ten out of the 20 most successful software enterprises in India were set up and /or are managed by former NRIs returning from the USA.

Until recently, very few migrants returned back to India of those who had the opportunity to live in the United States. However, today salaries for IT professionals are rising in India. According to classic development economics, if surplus of educated labor exists then out-migration of that labor will actually increase the productivity and wages of the labor left behind. Salaries for high-tech professionals are quickly rising, giving evidence that the surplus of highly skilled IT labor may not exist as it did in the 1980s, when high tech and financial professionals were making much less than their Indian counterparts who had migrated abroad. Today, the IT sector in India is attracting more NRIs back to India because of business opportunities and growth.

The IT sector in India is a fast growing industry with exports as the key driver to this growth. As the industry matures, the IT enabled outsourcing market is growing and attracting more and more multifunctional contracts to national firms. The industry continues to grow because the availability of cheap, highly skilled labor, growing infrastructure, and existence of world class IT firm, such as Infosys, Wipro and BPL. This environment is creating an incentive for Indian IT professionals in advanced industrialized nations, such as the U.S., to return to India for business opportunities as security for investments increases in India.

Balasubramanyam and Balasubramanyam (1997) argue that migrants, who originally left in the 1960s and 1970s played an important role in the establishment of the Indian software sector upon their return. As evidence they point to a number of software companies founded in Bangalore-including three of the most

prominent firms, Wipro Limited, Infomart, and BPL Systems-which were established by return migrant workers; concluding that it was this return migrating, and the subsequent brain gain, which provided much of the impetus for the rapid growth in India's software sector.

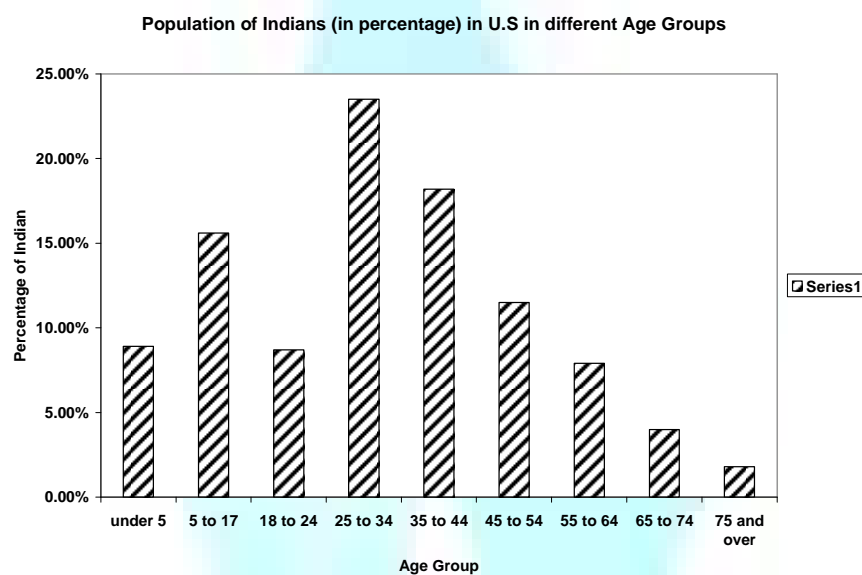
As per Robert Weismen (1980), the reason of returning back to India are personal. Returning expatriates may have aging parents or they may want their children raised in the Indian culture. But with the explosive growth of India's economy, cities such as Bangalore or Hyderabad increasingly are seen as new magnets for ambitious technologists-offering an intoxicating mix of hefty raises, multiple job postings and rapid career advancement, no longer the norm in Cambridge or in San Jose, California.

In last couple of years the number of Indians returning back has been constantly rising and according to survey recently conducted by Indus ventures around 60,000 professionals settled in US have returned to India in last year alone. This is nearly equal to Indians going to US yearly.

So, what are the reasons that have given rise to this trend? The possible reasons are:

1. Rapidly decreasing gap between salaries in India and US salaries of Indian IT professionals in last few years. If one compares the living cost and salary ratio, IT professional can lead much higher standard of living in India than he does in the Western countries.
2. Second reason is opportunities India is full of opportunities, with every MNC globally trying to open shop in India. Infact, the reason for such higher salaries in IT professionals is lack of people in this industry. According to one recent NASSCOM Survey, India is facing severe shortage of IT professional by nearly 30 %. So the IT professionals moving to India get much better growth opportunities than in the West.
3. Most of the returning Indians couples in the age group of 25 to 35 (see figure 4) having kids. The major factor cited by the survey was to protect their kids from the Western Culture.
4. Education is also one of the foremost reasons for Indians to move back. It is generally believed that Indian schooling system is quite good; however higher education is much better in the West.
5. Unsettling as moving back to India after spending years living and working abroad can be, global economic crises.

FIGURE 4: POPULATION OF INDIANS (IN PERCENTAGE) IN U.S IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS



(Source: American Community Survey 2008 (Available online))

An Indian-born software developer, Pavan Tadepalli, wanted to work in a high-tech hub with opportunity for career growth. So it was an easy decision when he was offered a permanent job in the Boston area, after a three-month assignment here ended in year 2009. Tadepalli turned it down, and choose to return to India.

"There are more opportunities in India now", he said "what I can do in Boston, I am confident can do the same thing in Hyderabad".

Joga Ryali worked in Silicon valley for 22 years until he got an offer this year to run the Hyderabad product development center for computer Associates, the computer software giant.

"From a professional point of view, I felt until recently that, I had more challenging prospects in the US"-Ryali said. "But that's no longer the case. Just in the last couple of years, three or four of my close friends made the move from Silicon Valley to India."

Neither the US nor the Indian government keeps count of how many Indian employees have left the American workforce to return to India. The Economic times, a business publication in India, estimated this year that 35,000 have returned to the largest Indian high-tech centre, which is now in and around Bangalore. That is still fraction of the approximately 2.57 million Indian residents of the U.S, a number that includes Indian-born residents as well as U.S citizens of Indian heritage.

MY ARGUMENT

Migrants return doesn't have automatically positive results for the development of their home countries unless a broad range of factors are in place to ensure this, including enabling social, political and economic conditions in countries of origin and destination, as well as migration management policies and mechanisms. Multi-stake holder partnerships are important means by which the development benefits of return can be maximized. Coordination and consultations among different states play an essential role in ensuring that policies in host countries and countries of origin effectively facilitate return and maximize it development benefits, coordinated partnership among diasporas, migrant workers and home town associations, business and the private sector, civil society organizations, and national and international organizations are equally important.

As a result of the potential benefits from the return migration, the Indian government has developed programs aimed at non-residents Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origins (PIOs). These programs include granting visa waivers and the facilitation of financial services, normally reserved for Indian citizens. Overall engagement with the potential return migrant workers and appeal to the permanent migrants to participate in the development of India has become an integral part of government policy in India.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER ACTION

A number of issues remain as government continues to explore migration for development options. Three key considerations include:

- (i) *Identify evidence of the impact of migration and return on poverty reduction and sustainable development:* Government needs to ensure that migrants are able to make real contributions to the country's development. Returnees do not often invest their remittances to create widespread

employment or larger benefits for others. Instead, they tend to be used for consumer spending, payment of debts, long term investment such as individual education, and the building and improvement of homes. Government need to be better document positive multiplier effects of return such as the development of returnee initiated programs that build local skill among the general population.

- (ii) *Work with nongovernmental partners to implement policies to overcome constraints to re integrating return migrants and investing their resources:* In addition to government policies, a number of nongovernmental approaches can help harness migration for development option. Some sending country NGOs have worked with their government to established networks of expatriates in a host country that support migrant savings and alternative investment programs. For example, in Philippines, local NGOs have helped migrants establish small-business ventures and local churches have launched micro enterprise activities. These efforts reveal how important it is for social development workers, policy makers, and implementers, as well as migrants and their families, to work together to ease reintegration and harness development potential.
- (iii) *Generate new alternative strategies to mobilize emigrant's knowledge and expertise in support of development:* Government need to explore ways to invest in the infrastructure of the professional sectors from which the migrants originally came.

CONCLUSION

This paper discusses the trends of software professional return migrants and its impact on the socio-economical status of India. In this paper we discussed the reasons for return migration. The globalizing effect of easy travel, fluid citizenship status, and rapid communications are key factors driving this return migration. Other reasons include, decreasing gap between salaries in India and US salaries and increasing opportunities in India. As a result, today's returning migrants are increasingly younger, more highly trained, and able to shuttle back and forth between their country of birth and their adopted country. Skilled return migrants are poised to become more important to local government policy and they hold the potential to help build global networks, forge further links between sending and receiving countries, and directly contribute to development efforts.

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