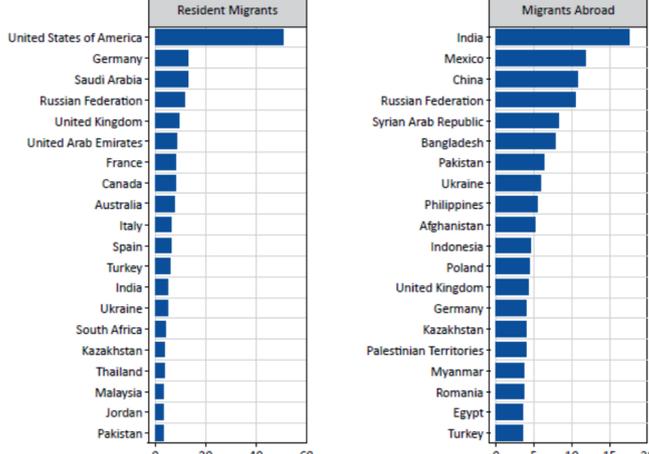


Migration to Germany and UK – Present and Future

Germany and the UK are two attractive countries of destination for skilled migrants from all over the world. As per the World Migration Report 2020, Germany is the second destination for migrants after the United States of America and UK is the fifth most sought after destination. The population of migrants in Germany increased from 8.9 million in 2000 to 13.1 million in 2019 (World Migration Report 2020). In 2017 alone, 38,000 skilled workers from countries outside the EU immigrated to Germany. The number of Indians in Germany doubled from 32,000 to 68,000 between 1900 and 2015 (Indian high-skilled migrants and international students in Germany, 2017). In response to the acute shortage of workers in the health sector, healthcare professionals including doctors, nurses, lab technicians and other workers from India, the Philippines and South Asian nations migrate in huge numbers to the UK, Germany and rest of the European countries. According to the Labour Market Assessment conducted by the Research and Analysis Division (RAD) of International Migration Centre – Karnataka (IMC-K), apart from the healthcare sector, UK and Germany also have skill shortages for workers in the wholesale and retail, manufacturing, construction, hospitality sectors, with additional requirements for caregivers, teachers and educators, scientists and engineers. Most of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) occupations are in the government’s list of the shortage of occupations in Germany. Forecasts for 2030 indicate that there is going to be continued strong demand in most of these sectors.



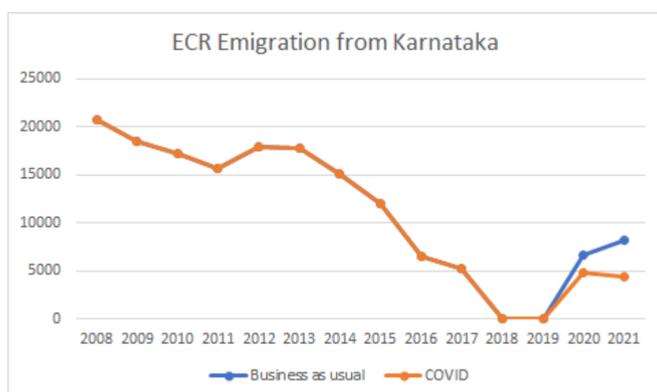
Source: UN DESA, 2019a (accessed 18 September 2019).

Source: World Migration Report, 2020

While Germany and the UK have been providing lucrative employment opportunities to skilled migrant workers across the globe, the scenario is bound to change due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic is having an unprecedented impact on immigration policies all over the world. International migration has come to a standstill. Countries have imposed temporary travel restrictions and closed consular and visa offices entirely or for non-emergency services. The health crisis may also lead to lasting negative effects on the socio-economic integration of immigrants, as discussed in the previous bulletin. While a lot of people have lost their jobs and had to come back and/or change their future plans, according to a report published by European Asylum Support Office, it is anticipated that migration may increase post-COVID 19 to European countries especially from the low-income countries given the economic crisis. Anticipating future migration flows is not as easy given the lack of data. However, COVID 19 is not the end of migration itself. It is a global phenomenon that will continue to take place and there will be fresh opportunities. Because economies will need workers to rebuild their shattered economies. India has a window of opportunity that can be used to upskill the workers for future migration. Past few months have brought forth certain skills, professions and workers who have been crucial in the pandemic. Doctors, nurses, caregivers, delivery drivers, cleaners – they will always be in demand. Therefore, India should use this time to prepare its cohort of workers to meet the demand in the future.

Estimating Emigration Trends from Karnataka: An Analysis

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a far reaching impact beyond the obvious health effects. One of these is the impact on livelihoods and economies, especially within global labour migration. With the world becoming more and more globalised and creolised, international migration has had occupied an important role, with the movement of people and skills becoming the norm. The pandemic has seen massive job losses across the globe with migrant workers returning to their countries of origin. While there are no official estimates of the estimated job losses, it will definitely not be a meagre amount.



Source : RAD IMC K

Using Karnataka as a state of origin, an attempt has been made by RAD to estimate the expected Emigration Clearances (ECs) to be obtained in 2021 using data from 2008 to 2019, available on the eMigrate portal. To account for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, two scenarios were calculated using (CAGR) and presented as seen in the graph above. The first scenario estimates the number of ECs in a business as usual case using CAGR between 2018 and 2019. Since migration had only taken place till March in 2020 before the lockdown was imposed and the numbers were nominal, the numbers of ECs for the year 2020 have also been calculated using CAGR. As per this estimate, the number of ECs issued would rise to 8251 in 2021 from 6622 in 2019 (Analysis by RAD, IMC-K). From the graph given above it is clear that in both scenarios, migration to the ECR countries was expected to increase but the rate of increase is greater in a business as usual scenario.

To account for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on labour migration, CAGR at the time of the SARS pandemic was first considered. However, due to the lack of data for that period (2002-03), it was decided to use the financial crisis of 2008-10 as a proxy comparative time period. While it is agreed that the effects of the global recession cannot equal the effect of the current pandemic, this analysis will provide with an estimate of the effect on labour migration and can be used as a good starting point in the absence of alternative data. It can also be observed that there has been a continuous decline in the number of ECs granted to the workers from 2015 onwards. It can be attributed to various reasons. The prominent among them is the economic slowdown in the Gulf countries due to the slump in the oil prices. Another major reason is the policy of ‘localisation’ being adopted by the gulf countries where they seek to give priority to their nationals. Therefore there has been a decrease in the demand for foreign workers. Many people also visit these countries on a tourist visa, later converting them to an employment visa and hence bypassing the eMigrate system.

Using the CAGR from the 2008-10 financial crisis as the base, it has been observed that the projected ECs obtained falls to 4402 in 2021. This difference of 3848 ECs between the current estimate and business as usual scenario poses a significant challenge and requires proactive policy measures, especially given the precarious job scenario domestically.

Know your benefits/opportunities under the Indian Community Welfare Fund

The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) was established in 2009 by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA), Government of India in 43 Indian Missions across the countries which have significant overseas Indian population. The fund was created to assist Indians living overseas in times of distress and emergency in “the most deserving cases” on a “means tested basis”. ICWF has also been a critical support in the emergency evacuation of Indian nationals from conflict zones, countries affected by natural disasters and other challenging situations. Given its immense utility, ICWF stands extended to all Indian Missions and Posts abroad. The ICWF covers three major areas- assisting Overseas Indian nationals in distress situations, support for Community Welfare activities and Improvement in Consular service.



Source: Ministry of External Affairs

When assisting Overseas Indian nationals in distress situations, the fund can be used for providing-

- Boarding and lodging for deserving distressed Indian nationals abroad
- Air passage to India to stranded Overseas Indian nationals
- Legal Assistance to deserving overseas Indian nationals who have committed minor crimes
- Legal/financial assistance to Indian women abandoned/cheated/abused by their NRI/PIO or foreign spouses
- Payment for small fines and penalties in respect of Indian nationals for minor offences/crimes
- Transportation of Mortal Remains of deceased Indian national to India or local cremation/burial of deceased
- Emergency Medical Care to overseas Indians who are involved in an accident and have life-threatening medical conditions or suffer a serious disability.

To help themselves and others, migrants must be aware of their rights, basic public services, financial and other resources they are entitled to. Just like ICWF, there are many other schemes initiated by the government of India and other countries, to protect their migrants overseas. But here comes the question of how many migrants are aware of these initiatives which will make them feel empowered when working in a foreign land, with respect to India, not many. The International Migration Centre-Karnataka (IMC-K) aims to empower migrants by keeping them informed on their rights and various aspects of migration which will enhance the process of safe, legal and humane migration from India. This will be done by the means of its unique Three-tier Architecture and through the Pre-departure Orientation Training.

Read more on the ICWF at <https://www.mea.gov.in/icwf.htm>