

**Govind Kumar Inakhiya** Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, New Delhi  
e-mail: govindkumar@jnu.ac.in

## IMPACT OF RETURN MIGRATION IN CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES: DYNAMICS AND CHALLENGE

Movement of people occurs from one region to another region, one country to another country by settling a temporary time or permanently called migration. It happens mostly based on push and pull factors. Migration from one native place to another is due to poor economic conditions, fewer business opportunities, educational hinderers, and unemployment. After industrialization and World War II, most of the countries experienced internal and external migration. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian countries are also going through practices of internal and external migration. The shift from a command economy to a market economy and the shift of skilled Russian manpower from the region to Russia resulted in the closure of federally funded industries. Most industries located in different locations of the CARs countries faced difficulties that have impacted the local population in various spheres. Poverty, unemployment, infrastructural degradation, and lack of adequate medical and educational facilities are the key factors for the migration from Central Asia to various regions of the world and within Central Asia. Nowadays, Return Migration (voluntary and forced) is happening worldwide due to the demand for a skilled workforce, policies for labour demand (destination countries), and the evolution of technocentric industries, pandemics, natural disasters, etc. All these factors impacted migration patterns in the Central Asia region. Therefore, the paper "Impact of Return Migration in Central Asian Countries: Dynamics and Challenge" is an effort to discuss the various factors responsible for the Return Migration in Central Asia. Also, it addresses the following questions: What are the push and pull factors for the external migration from CARs to another region of Eurasia, especially Russia, and what are the factors for internal migration within CARs? and What are the changing dynamics of the Return Migration in Central Asia?.

**Keywords:** Migration, Pull Factor and Push Factor, Central Asian, Eurasia, and Return Migration.

Говинд Кумар Инахия

Джавахарлала Неру Университеті, Үндістан, Нью-Дели қ.  
e-mail: govindkumar@jnu.ac.in

### Орталық Азия елдеріне қайтымды көші-қонның әсері: динамикасы мен сын-қатерлері

Адамдардың қозғалысы бір аймақтан екінші аймаққа, бір елден екінші елге көші-қон деп аталатын уақытша немесе тұрақты негізде қоныстану арқылы жүреді. Бұл негізінен тарту және итермелеу факторларына негізделген. Бір жерден екінші жерге көші-қон нашар экономикалық жағдайлар, бизнес мүмкіндіктерінің аздығы, білім алу мүмкіндіктерінің аздығы және жұмыссыздық сияқты кедергілерге байланысты. Индустрияландыру мен екінші дүниежүзілік соғыстан кейін көптеген елдер ішкі және сыртқы көші-қонды бастан өткерді. Кеңес Одағы ыдырағаннан кейін Орталық Азия елдері де ішкі және сыртқы көші-қон тәжірибесін бастан кешуде. Командалық экономикадан нарықтық экономикаға көшу және аймақтан Ресейге білікті жұмыс күшінің ауысуы федералды қаржыландырылатын салалардың жабылуына алып келді. Орталық Азия аймағы елдерінің әртүрлі жерлерінде орналасқан өндірістердің көпшілігі қиындықтарға тап болып, әртүрлі салаларда жергілікті халыққа кері әсерін тигізді. Кедейлік, жұмыссыздық, инфрақұрылымның деградациясы және тиісті медициналық және білім беру мекемелерінің болмауы Орталық Азиядан әлемнің әртүрлі аймақтарына және Орталық Азияға келетін көші-қонның негізгі факторлары болып табылады. Қазіргі уақытта бүкіл әлемде білікті жұмыс күшіне сұраныс әсерінен, жұмыс күшіне сұраныс саясаты (баратын елдер) әсерінен әлемде кері көші-қон (ерікті және мәжбүрлі) үдерісі орын алуда, сондай-ақ техноцентрлік салалардың дамуы, пандемия, табиғи апаттар және т.б. осы сияқты факторлардың барлығы Орталық Азия аймағындағы көші-қон үлгілеріне әсер етті. Осылайша, «Орталық Азия елдеріндегі қайтарымды көші-қонның әсері: динамикасы мен сын-қатерлері» мақаласы аясында Орталық Азиядағы қайтарымды көші-қонға әсер ететін әртүрлі факторларды талқылауға талпыныс жасаынды. Сонымен қатар, келесі сұрақтар қарастырылды: Орталық Азиядан Еуразияның басқа аймағына,

әсіресе Ресейге сыртқы көші-қонның итермелеу және тарту факторлары қандай және Орталық Азиядағы ішкі көші-қон факторлары қандай? Орталық Азиядағы кері көші-қон динамикасы қалай өзгеруде?

**Түйін сөздер:** көші-қон, тарту факторы және итерелеу факторы, Орталық Азия, Еуразия, кері көші-қон.

Говинд Кумар Инахия

Университет Джавахарлала Неру, Индия, г. Нью-Дели

e-mail: govindkumar@jnu.ac.in

### **Влияние возвратной миграции в страны Центральной Азии: динамика и вызовы**

Перемещение людей происходит из одного региона в другой регион, из одной страны в другую страну путем расселения на временной или постоянной основе, называемой миграцией. Это происходит в основном на основе факторов притяжения и выталкивания. Миграция из одного родного места в другое происходит из-за плохих экономических условий, меньшего количества возможностей для бизнеса, препятствий для получения образования и безработицы. После индустриализации и Второй мировой войны большинство стран испытали внутреннюю и внешнюю миграцию. После распада Советского Союза страны Центральной Азии также переживают практику внутренней и внешней миграции. Переход от командной экономики к рыночной экономике и переток квалифицированной рабочей силы из региона в Россию привели к закрытию финансируемых из федерального бюджета отраслей. Большинство производств, расположенных в разных точках стран центральноазиатского региона, столкнулись с трудностями, которые отразились на местном населении в различных сферах. Бедность, безработица, деградация инфраструктуры и отсутствие адекватных медицинских и образовательных учреждений являются ключевыми факторами миграции из Центральной Азии в различные регионы мира и внутри Центральной Азии. В настоящее время обратная миграция (добровольная и вынужденная) происходит во всем мире из-за спроса на квалифицированную рабочую силу, политики спроса на рабочую силу (страны назначения), а также развития техноцентрических отраслей, пандемий, стихийных бедствий и т. д. все эти факторы повлияли на модели миграции в регионе Центральной Азии. Таким образом, статья «Воздействие возвратной миграции в странах Центральной Азии: динамика и проблемы» представляет собой попытку обсудить различные факторы, влияющие на возвратную миграцию в Центральной Азии. Кроме того, в нем рассматриваются следующие вопросы: каковы факторы выталкивания и притяжения внешней миграции из Центральной Азии в другой регион Евразии, особенно в Россию, и каковы факторы внутренней миграции внутри Центральной Азии? Как меняется динамика обратной миграции в Центральной Азии?

**Ключевые слова:** миграция, фактор притяжения и фактор выталкивания, Центральная Азия, Евразия, обратная миграция.

## **Introduction**

Migration is an age-old phenomenon deep-rooted in the fabric of human civilisation since its inception. Initially, as settlers, humans embarked on quests for resources, marking the genesis of migration. Throughout history, territorial demarcations and regional supremacy have spurred individuals to traverse from one place to another. Today, migration predominantly occurs as people seek better employment opportunities and conducive work environments, often leading to tensions among nations, conflicts, wars, environmental calamities, and challenges to human security.

The latter part of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st century have witnessed an upsurge in migration, driven by various factors. Increasing trade activities, cultural exchanges,

business prospects, heightened infrastructures, and advancements in technology have all contributed to the acceleration of migration processes. These forces continue to shape the contemporary landscape of worldwide migration.

The International Organisation of Migration (hereafter, IOM) (2023) reported that 3.6 per cent of the global population falls under migrants, with 281 million migrants in the world in 2020. As per recent data, US dollars 647 billion were transferred under remittance worldwide by migrants (IOM, 2023).

The United Nations Organisation (hereafter, UNO) classifies the two broad categories of international migrants i.e. long-term and short-term/temporary migrants. Further, the UN specifies that any individual who moves from his or her country of usual residence for at least twelve months for any reason that they are documented or not documented

falls into the long-term migrants. For the short-term category, any individual who moves from his or her country of usual residence is above three months and less than twelve months (UNO).

Monitoring migration worldwide, the oldest organization, the International Organisation for Migration (formed in 1951), provided a broader definition of a migrant: “any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of the person’s legal status; whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; what the causes for the movement are; or what the length of the stay is” (IMO, 2018). The World Migration Report has elaborated that “migrants are a far broader category of people who have left their places of habitual residence to live elsewhere and this happens mostly within a country due to urbanization” (World Migration Report, 2022).

### **Return Migrant and Return Migration**

Return migration refers to the act of individuals returning to their home country after a period of staying in a host country. There can be various reasons for this, such as changes in the political setup, better employment opportunities in the home country, environmental factors, conflicts or war, and other circumstances. Return migration allows individuals to reconnect with their roots, contribute to their home country’s development, and reunite with their families and communities. It is a significant decision that can be influenced by personal, social, and economic factors.

IMO defined migrants- as “who leave their country at least for one year and after they return to their native country, and the return of the migrant is not necessarily voluntary” (IMO, 2011). According to King (2000), return migration is “... the process whereby people return to their country or place of origin after a significant period in another country or region. Clearly, return migration must be related to the emigration which preceded it; furthermore, a return may be the prelude to further episodes of spatial mobility” (King, 2000, p. 8).

Most regulations and guidelines restrict the use of the term illegal migration for certain reasons; nowadays, the new term, mixed migration, has come into practice. According to the International Organisation of Migration, mixed flows concern irregular movements, frequently involving transit

migration, where refugees, asylum-seekers, economic migrants, and other migrants move without the requisite documentation, crossing borders and arriving at their destination in an unauthorized manner.”

According to the United Nations Statistics Division, returning migrants are “persons returning to their country of citizenship after having been international migrants (whether short-term or long-term) in another country and who intend to stay in their own country for at least a year.” This definition embraces four dimensions: the first one is country of origin, second is place of residence abroad, third is length of stay in the host country, and fourth one length of stay in the home country after return (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2007, p. 164).

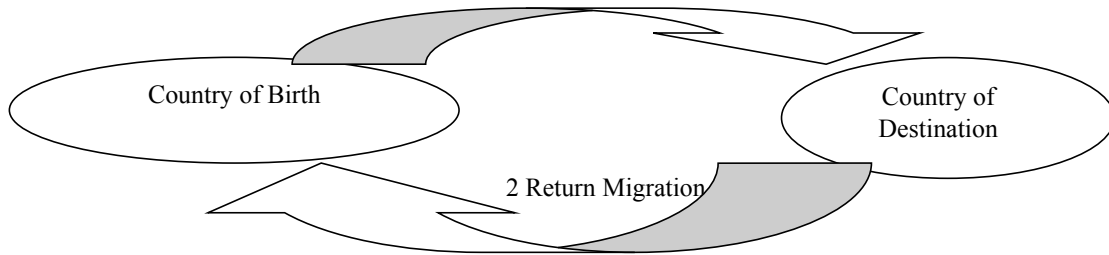
The term reverse migration or, nowadays, “return emigration” is mostly due to economic reasons. Powerful motives, including the difficult living and working conditions in the host country, pulling factors from the families back home, termination of a job, etc., do contribute to the exact cause for the return emigration” (Brettell & Hollifield, 2000, p. 99).

Various forms of return migration based on different cases, such as chart-I, the last country of residence before a return is not necessarily the country of initial destination (Chart III.1.2), and a departure from the country of immigration is not necessarily a return to the country of origin (Chart III.1.3) (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2007, p. 165).

Chart-I, is about the various patterns of the return migration. The case first (I-1), where the migrant moves to the destination country and returns to their homeland country/origin country, falls under the initial return migration. Case I.2, the first migration from the birth country to the destination country, and from there he/she moves for better opportunities to the next destination country, which falls under secondary migration, and from the last country, he/she returns to own birth country. Case I.3, where the migrants move from their birth country to their destination country, further he/ she moves to the next destination country, and from the last destination, he /she moves to the initial destination country which falls under secondary migration, and from there he / she return to own birth country fall under return migration. It can be said that the return migration is very complex when migrants move to multiple countries and back to their homeland country.

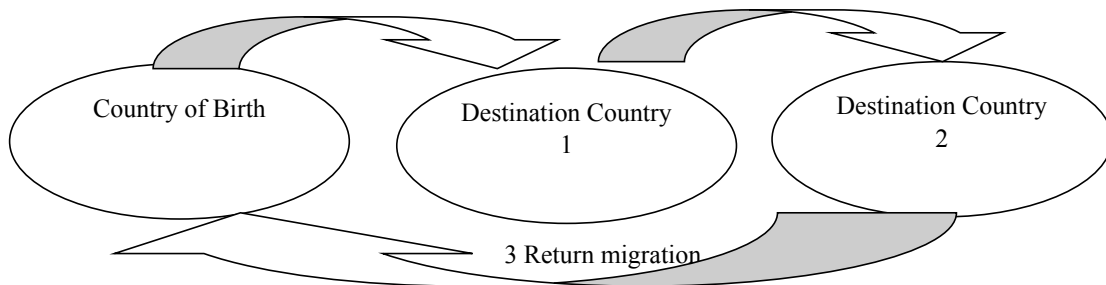
**Chart-I, Various cases of migration**

**Case- I.1: Initial migration**



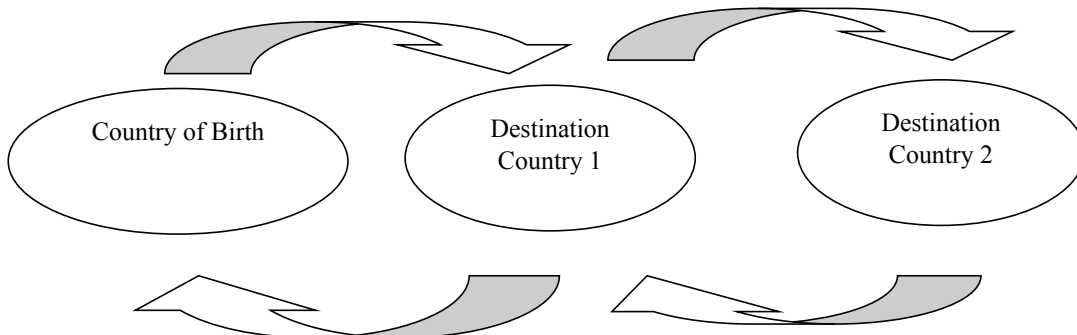
**Case- I.2**

**1 Initial Migration 2 Secondary Migration**



**Case-I.3**

**1 Initial Migration 2 Secondary Migration**



4 Return Migration

3 Secondary Migration

Source: Dumont and Spielvogel, 2007 :165

**Factors responsible for the return migration**

When an individual returns to his/her own native home for destinations (for he/she migrated earlier) due to some reasons, it can be political, economic, social, cultural, personal, and government. There are some factors responsible for their return to their own homes;

**A) Social factor:** Once an individual migrates to another place and again returns to some value, to connect with roots, and due to some community activities. Under this category, Francesco Cerase

(1974) has identified four different factors influencing the migrants to return to their respective countries i.e. return due to the failure to integrate, conservative returns, return of pensioners, and innovative returns (Cerese,1974, pp. 250-251).

**B) Political factor:** After migration, there have been some changes in the host country's political setup, and new regimes came into power. The new regime started new reforms in the host country and more employment, infrastructure, and new policies towards a conducive environment for the migrated

people from their own country. For example, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have introduced some reforms in their respective countries and launched some people-friendly policies to attract the people who migrated earlier. Now their home countries have made some arrangements so they can come and serve their own country. In 2011 in Kazakhstan, the program – ‘Nurly Kosh’ (2009-2011) was an excellent initiative from the Kazakh government to brain drain.

**C) Economic Factor:** The motive behind returning home is that if there are better job avenues, more attractive, they earn money, and now they return to their own country to invest and start their ventures. Most Indian immigrants move to Gulf countries and return with a reasonable amount and they start their own ventures at their own homes.

**D) Government as a factor:** The government plays a substantial role in influencing migrants’ decisions to return to their home countries, whether they are in the destination country or their country of origin. Policies enforced by governments, such as those observed in Russia and the USA, can serve as determining factors. For instance, Russia has implemented policies tailored for Russian citizens, while modifications in work visa policies during the Trump administration in the USA actuated shifts in migrant movements, leading many to opt to return to their home countries. These governmental decisions have contributed to the drift of migrants choosing to go back to their native homes.

**E) Personal factors:** After a long duration, stay out of your own home in a host country, after retirement, new work permit policies, and homesickness are the factors for migration and returning to your native place.

To conclude migration scholars have identified various factors influencing migrants’ decisions to return home. Socially, ties to roots and community activities play a role. Politically, changes in host countries’ regimes and reforms affect migrants. Economically, better job opportunities and investment prospects drive returns. Government policies and personal circumstances also regulate return migration trends.

### Migration in Central Asian Countries:

Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, migration from Central Asian countries occurred due to socioeconomic and policy reasons. Within Eurasia, Central Asian people migrate to two destinations, Russia and Kazakhstan (Ryazantsev et al., 2017, pp 40). These two countries attracted migrants from the Central Asian countries

primarily because of economic growth, revenue from oil and oil exports, and fruits of the cheap migrant workers.

### Factors Responsible for Migration in Central Asian Countries:

Migration is not a single-dimensional phenomenon; many factors are responsible for migrating from one nation to another. Most of the migrants in Central Asian countries leave their place due to unemployment, unskilled, lower wages, inflation, ethnic, cultural, inadequate educational infrastructure, non-availability of industries, etc.

**Table 1** – The average wage level in the Central Asian Countries:

| Country      | 1991 | 2010 (in Euro)      |
|--------------|------|---------------------|
| Kazakhstan   | 80,5 | 75,3/395eur         |
| Kyrgyzstan   | 67,2 | 22,2/117eur         |
| Tajikistan   | 67,5 | 11,5/61eur          |
| Turkmenistan | 75,5 | --                  |
| Uzbekistan   | 66,8 | 25,0/140 eur (2004) |

Source: CIS Committee, in Choudinovskikh, O., Denissenko M. (2013)

This table shows the average wage level in the Central Asian countries for the twenty years from 1991 to 2010. In Central Asian republics, especially Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, the absence of permanent employment and poverty are the main factors that cause individuals to migrate to Russia and Kazakhstan. The table shows a comparative analysis of labour wages from 1991 to 2010.

This table shows the wages for the workers in Central Asian countries. In Kazakhstan, the currency is KZT (Kazakhstani Tenge). From 2015 to 2019, the value of wages of the Kazakhstani Tenge gradually increased. In 2015, the wage of workers was 126,021 of the local KZT. By 2019, the value of the wage had risen to 187,510 KZT. In Kyrgyzstan, the currency is KJS (Kyrgyzstani Som). From 2015 to 2018, the wages of the workers in Kyrgyzstani Som showed a steady increase. However, the value for 2019 is not available in the table. In Tajikistan, the currency is TJS (Tajikistani Somoni). From 2015 to 2019, the wages of the worker in Tajikistan have been increasing. In 2015, the wage of workers was equivalent to 879 TJS. By 2019, the value had risen to 1,234 TJS. In Turkmenistan, the currency is Turkmen Tenge. From 2015 to 2017, the wages showed a slight increase. However, the wage data for 2018 and 2019 are not available in the table.

In Uzbekistan, the currency is UZS (Uzbekistani Som). From 2016 to 2019, the wages of workers in Uzbekistani have significantly increased. In 2016, wages were equivalent to 1,293,800 of the local currency. By 2019, the wages had risen to

2,324,500 in the local currency. The wages of workers' values provide insights into the exchange rates and economic conditions in these countries, showcasing the fluctuations and trends in wages in their respective currencies over the years.

**Table 2** – Minimum wages in Central Countries (in respective currency)

| Country      | Currency | 2015   | 2016    | 2017    | 2018    | 2019    |
|--------------|----------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Kazakhstan   | KZT      | 126021 | 142898  | 150827  | 163257  | 187510  |
| Kyrgyzstan   | KJS      | 13483  | 14847   | 15670   | 16427   | --      |
| Tajikistan   | TJS      | 879    | 962     | 1144    | 1234    | --      |
| Turkmenistan | TMT      | 1263   | 1381    | 1403    | --      | --      |
| Uzbekistan   | UZS      | --     | 1293800 | 1453200 | 1822200 | 2324500 |

Source: information gathered from <https://tradingeconomics.com/>

**Table 3** – Poverty Rate in Central Asian Countries (2020)

| Country      | Poverty Rate |
|--------------|--------------|
| Kazakhstan   | 5.3%         |
| Kyrgyzstan   | 25%          |
| Tajikistan   | 26%          |
| Turkmenistan | 0.2%         |
| Uzbekistan   | 17.0%        |

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/population-below-poverty-line/>

The table shows the poverty rates of the countries mentioned in the table. In Kazakhstan, the poverty rate is relatively low at 5.3%. This indicates that

a small percentage of the population lives below the poverty line. Kyrgyzstan has a higher poverty rate of 25%. This means that a significant portion of the population in Kyrgyzstan is experiencing poverty. Tajikistan has a similar poverty rate of 26%. This suggests that a considerable number of people in Tajikistan are living in poverty. Turkmenistan has a remarkably low poverty rate of 0.2%. This indicates that the majority of the population in Turkmenistan is above the poverty line. Uzbekistan has a poverty rate of 17.0%. This suggests that a significant portion of the population in Uzbekistan is facing economic challenges and living in poverty. These poverty rates provide insights into the economic conditions and disparities within these countries, highlighting the varying poverty levels among their populations.

**Table 4** – Unemployment in Central Asian Countries

| Country                   | Unemployment (1991) (%) | Unemployment (2000) (%) | Unemployment (2010) (%) | Unemployment (2020) (%) |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Kazakhstan <sup>1</sup>   | 0.90                    | 12.75                   | 5.77                    | 4.89                    |
| Kyrgyzstan <sup>2</sup>   | 1.0                     | 1.98                    | 2.8                     | 4.6                     |
| Tajikistan <sup>3</sup>   | 1.9                     | 15.13                   | 10.89                   | 7.4                     |
| Turkmenistan <sup>4</sup> | 1.4                     | 11.51                   | 4.0                     | 4.8                     |
| Uzbekistan <sup>5</sup>   | 1.9                     | 12.21                   | 5.36                    | 5.29                    |

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/KAZ/kazakhstan/unemployment-rate>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/KGZ/kyrgyz-republic/unemployment-rate>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/TJK/tajikistan/unemployment-rate>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/TKM/turkmenistan/unemployment-rate#:~:text=Unemployment%20refers%20to%20the%20share,a%200.01%25%20decline%20from%202020.>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/UZB/uzbekistan/unemployment-rate#:~:text=Unemployment%20refers%20to%20the%20share,a%200.73%25%20increase%20from%202020.>

This Table no – 4, shows the unemployment rates of the countries mentioned in the table. In Kazakhstan, the unemployment rate in 1991 was .90%. In 2000, it rose to 12.75 per cent; in 2010, it was 5.77 per cent, and in 2020, it reduced to 4.89 per cent.

This indicates that a relatively lower percentage of the population is currently unemployed. Kyrgyzstan has a slightly lower unemployment rate of 4.6%. Before independence, all Central Asian Republics had

lower unemployment rates, but after the disintegration of the Union in 1992- 2000, the unemployment rate was too high in all CARs except Kyrgyzstan. From 2010 to 2020, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were above the mark (worst) of the ideal unemployment rate (3-5%). According to Patnaik (2005), “When the economy declined, and federally funded industries closed down, employment and income security also went. The Russians left Central Asia in large numbers to resettle in Russia (Patnaik, 2005).”

**Table 5** – Net migration between the Central Asian countries, 1992-1999 (thousands)

|              | Russia | Kazakhstan | Kyrgyzstan | Tajikistan | Turkmenistan | Uzbekistan |
|--------------|--------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Russia       |        | -1222,9    | -217,9     | -          | -87,1        | -          |
| Kazakhstan   | 1360,9 |            | -5,1       | -          | -17,6        | -          |
| Kyrgyzstan   | 241,5  | 1,2        |            | -          | 0,1          | -          |
| Tajikistan   | 287,2  | 11,1       | 9,9        |            | 7,8          | -          |
| Turkmenistan | 105,5  | 21,2       | -0,1       |            |              |            |
| Uzbekistan   | 531,4  | 25,1       | -20        | -          | 6,4          |            |

Source: Choudinovskikh, O., Denissenko, M. (2013)

**Table 6** – Net migration between the Central Asian countries, 2000-2010 (thousands)

| Country      | Period    | Arrivals      | Departures   | Net-migration |
|--------------|-----------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Russia       | 2000-2010 | 2389,4 (1,6%) | 823,8 (0,6%) | 1565,6        |
| Kazakhstan   | 2000-2010 | 617,9 (4,1%)  | 791,2 (5,3%) | -173,3        |
| Kyrgyzstan   | 2000-2010 | 45,4 (0,9%)   | 385,0 (7,9%) | -339,6        |
| Tajikistan   | 2000-2010 | 14,7 (0,2%)   | 108,1 (1,8%) | -93,4         |
| Turkmenistan | 2000-2010 | 5,1 (0,1%)    | 95,5 (2,0%)  | -90,5         |
| Uzbekistan   | 2000-2006 | 47,5 (0,2%)   | 631,0 (2,6%) | -583,6        |
|              | 2000-2010 | -             | -            | -786,5        |

Source: Data from national statistical agencies, CIS Statistical Committee, Choudinovskikh, O., Denissenko, M. (2013)

### Migration Patterns in Central Asian Countries:

The migration within Central Asia and from Central Asia is based on various patterns such as socioeconomic composition (includes subcategories- age, gender, and education of migrants), period of stay (short and long term), the purpose of the migration (mainly work, education, ethnic return (after the disintegration of the Soviet Union Russian migrated from CARs to Russia) and family reunification. However, the more prominent push factors gearing emigration from Central Asian

countries are unemployment, low wages, and limited opportunities for improving livelihoods in their home country (Sagynbekova, 2017; IOM, 2015). This is also reflected in the official statistics – over 90% of Central Asian migrants are labour migrants (Abdulloeva, et al., 2017).

Pull factors in Russia and Kazakhstan that attracted Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan migrants include sustainable demand for workers, the demographic drive, higher wages, fewer visa formalities, and less expensive transport for these two destinations (Delovarova et al, 2013, p. 1506).

In 2004-2008, the height of the boom years, 800,000 Kyrgyz, 1.5 million Tajik, and 2.5 million Uzbek left work from Russia and Kazakhstan because of low-paid work in construction and real estate works (Delovarova et al., 2013, p. 1506).

Central Asian workers increasingly choose Russia as their primary destination for employment, driven by factors such as its dwindling working-age population. From 1950 to 2020, Russia's working population has seen a decline from 102,799,000 to 145,934,000. Projections suggest this trend will continue, with the population expected to reach 130 million. In 2019, the number of workers migrating to Russia from Uzbekistan was 524,000, from Tajikistan was 265,000, from Kyrgyzstan was 165,000, and from Kazakhstan was 105,000.

In 2019, worker migration from Central Asian countries to Russia was substantial: Uzbekistan contributed 524,000 workers, Tajikistan 265,000, Kyrgyzstan 165,000, and Kazakhstan 105,000, respectively. According to Mohapatra (2013), "With regards to motivation for migration, lack of employment opportunities is emerging as one of the major factors responsible for the migration of native Central Asians. For instance, in Tajikistan's case, the mismatch between the high rate of growth of the population and the low rate of economic development is one of the important factors contributing to the migration" (Mohapatra, 2013, p. 140).

Unskilled labourers from Central Asian countries are migrating to Russia; according to Patnaik, "Tajikistan is the poorest country of the region and has been a major supplier of seasonal labourers to Russia." Further, he stressed the recent trend within Central Asia: "There has been a movement within Central Asia, especially to Kazakhstan from neighbouring countries due to its oil-driven economy growth (Patnaik, 2005)."

Therefore, Central Asian migration, driven by socioeconomic factors and confined opportunities at home, heavily favors labour migration to Russia and Kazakhstan. Push factors include unemployment and low wages, while pull factors contain higher wages and fewer visa formalities. This trend, worsened by demographic shifts, underscores the region's economic dynamics and migration patterns.

### **Why CARs migrants move to Russia and Kazakhstan:**

In Central Asian countries (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan), three factors are prominent to migrants to they move from their native country to Russia and Kazakhstan:

**1. Visa-free travel:** Russia and Kazakhstan are the most favourable destinations for the workers of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and other CARs. For the developmental process, the visa-free travel policy and also the migration policy of Russia and Kazakhstan from the region have addressed the issue of border controls, visa policies and integration of the regions. At present, 38 countries of the world allow visa-free travel in Russia with restrictions on time duration. Among CARs countries except Turkmenistan, other four countries are allowed to travel visa-free (Schenk, 2010 p. 105). From these countries, citizens can stay in Russia without registering or obtaining a visa for up to 90 days every six months. There are differences between countries. The citizens of Tajikistan can stay in Russia without registering for up to 15 days, while citizens of Kazakhstan can stay for up to 30 days (V.I. Vernadsky Crimean Federal University, 2015). Kazakhstan also has a visa-free travel policy for thirteen countries of the world. Similarly, Russia, except Turkmenistan and the other four countries, are allowed to travel visa-free for nineteen days in Kazakhstan.

**2. Linguistic and cultural nearness of CARs with Russia and Kazakhstan:** The historical and cultural legacies of Russia and Kazakhstan are another factor for CAR migrants to work in both countries. Migrant workers, particularly from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, travel with a factor. Kazakhstan has been a new migration centre for Central Asian countries since 2000, especially Russia, and is attractive to Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. However, the aforementioned immigrant networks are expected to remain effective and networks will form in new countries due to the New Uzbek Strategy.

**3. Economic factor:** The native Central Asian labourers migrate to Russia and Kazakhstan due to the high salaries offered to the workers.

### **Changing Dynamics of the Return Migration in Central Asia**

The various factors responsible for return migration have been discussed in the above section, and these factors can be traced to return migration in Central Asian countries. The Central Asian migrants return from the host country due to social, political, government, and economic factors. The social and political factors are more prominent in the case of return migration in the Central Asian Republics.

There are two major categories of return migration in Central Asian countries: (i) voluntary returns, and (ii) forced return (deported and



expelled). Under category one, the migrants return to their respective native places due to the completion of labour activities in Russia and other countries, migrants exhausted from working, illness, disability, sessional, retirement, homesickness, family reasons, and victims of trafficking.

Under the second category, which is very significant, once the worker moves to the host country for betterment, but due to some reason, they are forcefully sent to their homeland, most of it due to re-entry bans and tightened migration laws.

The second category of return migrants is profoundly poignant, particularly concerning the challenges faced by migrants from Central Asian countries due to the Russian re-entry ban. This ban has affected approximately 3 million people who had previously sought to re-enter Russia. Spanning a decade, the entry ban has had significant repercussions. According to the Director for Migration, in 2018, around 253,000 individuals were barred from entering Russia, with a similar number of around 250,000 facing entry restrictions in 2019 (Ryazantsev et al., 2021: 168).

Ryazantsev et al. (2021) further elaborate, noting that individuals from Tajikistan constitute a significant portion of those on the blacklist. Among them, approximately 12,000 individuals were deported for up to ten years due to the acquisition and utilization of false patents and other documents. Additionally, around 5,000 people were prohibited from entering Russia due to diagnoses of infectious diseases (Ryazantsev et al., 2021, pp. 169).

There are three dimensions for return migration: economic incorporation, social connectedness, and civil inclusion (Agadjanian, 2014, pp. 582-583). From 2000 onwards, the phenomenon of return migration came into existence in the region. Various theories of migration are emerging in the region. Neo-realism, neo-liberalism, and national interest are the backgrounds of the new dynamics in the region. All these happened due to the political leadership initiatives, new shift in national polity, and new narratives of the development and homeland, especially in Central Asian countries. Changes in respective states came out with the tag of Soviet influence, transformation in the political setup and coming out from Western perspective and stamp of authoritarian and totalitarian, etc. Moreover, the leadership of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan is far beyond other CAR nations and has started to attract their native, ethnic, and own people from around the world to return and serve the nation. In this regard, the program called “Nurly Kosh” for 2009-2011 was adopted in 2008 and Uzbekistan President Mirjoyed Savket has introduced some strategic efforts to reorient this “brain drain” problem into a “brain gain” by attracting back highly-skilled Uzbeks scattered around the world with the change of leadership in Uzbekistan in 2016. These two different initiatives have changed the migration pattern in the region and started the process of return migration in both countries. There are some dynamics as followed in the Central Asian region that have changed the migration patterns:

Table 7 – Remittance Flow in Central Asian Countries 2000-2020

| Country             | 2000 (US \$Billion and Million) |        | 2005 (US \$Billion and Million) |        | 2010 (US \$Billion and Million) |        | 2015 (US \$Billion and Million) |        | 2020 (US \$Billion and Million) |        |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------|--------|
|                     | Received                        | Sent   | Received                        | Sent   | Received                        | Sent   | Received                        | Sent   | Received                        | Sent   |
| <b>Kazakhstan</b>   | 67.7M                           | 121.5M | 62.0M                           | 1.9B   | 225.6M                          | 3.0 B  | 294M                            | 3.2B   | 374.4M                          | 2.1B   |
| <b>Kyrgyzstan</b>   | 2.2M                            | 11.2   | 313M                            | 53.3M  | 1.33 B                          | 167.8  | 2.3B                            | 389.5M | 2.4B                            | 505.6M |
| <b>Tajikistan</b>   | NA                              | NA     | 564.4M                          | 68.8M  | 2.0B                            | 186.4M | 3.7B                            | 240.4M | 2.2B                            | 108.4M |
| <b>Turkmenistan</b> | NA                              | NA     | NA                              | NA     | NA                              | NA     | NA                              | NA     | NA                              | NA     |
| <b>Uzbekistan</b>   | NA                              | NA     | 1.0B                            | 148.3M | 3.4 B                           | 260 M  | 64B                             | 676M   | 7.1B                            | 341.1M |

Source: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/total-remittance-inflows-and-outflows-1980-present?width=1000&height=850&iframe=true>  
<https://www.pragueprocess.eu/en/countries/424>

The table shows the amounts of remittances received and sent by migrants of different countries over the years. In 2000, Kazakhstan received \$67.7 million and sent \$121.5 million. In 2005, the

amount received decreased to \$62.0 million, while the amount sent increased significantly to \$1.9 billion. In 2010, Kazakhstan received \$225.6 million and sent \$3.0 billion. The trend continued in 2015,

with \$294 million received and \$3.2 billion sent. Finally, in 2020, Kazakhstan received \$374.4 million and sent \$2.1 billion. Moving on to Kyrgyzstan, in 2000, they received \$2.2 million and sent \$11.2 million. In 2005, the amount received increased to \$313 million, while the amount sent decreased to \$53.3 million. In 2010, Kyrgyzstan received \$1.33 billion and sent \$167.8 million. In 2015, they received \$2.3 billion and sent \$389.5 million. Finally, in 2020, Kyrgyzstan received \$505.6 million. For Tajikistan, the data starts from 2005. They received \$564.4 million and sent \$68.8 million. In 2010, the amount received increased to \$2.0 billion. In 2015, they received \$186.4 million and sent \$3.7 billion. Finally, in 2020, Tajikistan received \$240.4 million and sent \$2.2 billion. Unfortunately, there is no data available for Turkmenistan in this table. As for Uzbekistan, they received \$1.0 billion and sent \$148.3 million in 2005. In 2010, the amount received increased to \$3.4 billion. In 2015, they received \$260 million and sent \$64 billion. Finally, in 2020, Uzbekistan received \$676 million and sent \$7.1 billion. This analysis provides insights into the financial transactions of these countries over the years, showcasing their economic activities and relationships with other nations.

**Table 8** – Migration in Central Asian Countries (2019 and 2020)

| Country                         | Outflow (Persons)          | Inflow (Persons)           |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Kazakhstan<sup>1</sup></b>   | 45225(2019)<br>29088(2020) | 12000(2019)<br>11441(2020) |
| <b>Kyrgyzstan<sup>2</sup></b>   | 5822<br>(45000 in 2011)    | 10000                      |
| <b>Tajikistan<sup>3</sup></b>   | 54000                      | 40000                      |
| <b>Turkmenistan<sup>4</sup></b> | 125,000                    | --                         |
| <b>Uzbekistan<sup>5</sup></b>   | 13648                      | 1105                       |

The above table provides information of people's inflow and outflow from the Central Asian Countries. In 2019, there were forty-five thousand two hundred twenty five people who migrated from

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pragueprocess.eu/en/component/sprint/?task=country.exportpdf&id=419>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pragueprocess.eu/en/countries/420-kyrgyz-republic>

<sup>3</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/tajikistan/central-asia-tajiks-who-fled-civil-war-no-longer-refugees>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/turkmenistan.htm>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.pragueprocess.eu/en/countries/426-republic-of-uzbekistan>

Kazakhstan to other parts of the world and subsequently, in 2020, twenty-nine thousand and eighty-eight had left the country. And contrarily, in 2019, twelve thousand people came to Kazakhstan and in 2020, the number was eleven thousand four hundred forty-one.

If we look at the data of Kyrgyzstan, five thousand eight hundred twenty-two people left the country in 2019. if compare the number with 2011 it very less as it was forty-five thousand and the inflow was approximately ten thousand.

In Tajikistan, fifty-four thousand people left the country and forty thousand people entered in country in the year of 2019-2020. In case of the Turkmenistan, in the same year one lac twenty-five thousand people left the country, and there is no information about the people who entered the country in a given year. In Uzbekistan around one lac thirty-six thousand and forty-eight people had left the country while only eleven hundred and five people entered in the.

Hence, the data exemplify trends of people's migration from five Central Asian countries i.e. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, highlighting fluxes in outbound and inbound populations, and offering worthwhile insights into regional migration dynamics.

### Country-wise initiative for the return migrants

#### Case-1: Kazakhstan

In Central Asia, Kazakhstan is one of the first states who started some initiative to facilitate migrants. On 5<sup>th</sup> September 2000, migration policy was formed under government decree N: 1346. The policy is known as the concept of the migration policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The mandate of the policy is to look at national socioeconomic development and protect the rights of the migrants in the country. Also, it focuses on the migration from Kazakhstan to other countries and those who are in Kazakhstan came from other countries to serve Kazakhstan. The target of the policy (from 2001-2010, initial ten years) was to support the ethnic Kazakhs who left the country and migrated to Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Mongolia, and China. In continuation of the policy, President of Kazakhstan had announced the annual immigration quota for ethnic Kazakhs who left the country long back and are willing to come back to their own birth /homeland country can be allowed to come and settle in Kazakhstan. In the policy it is the provision, that if the application is pending at government level, the process of the application

and permission can expedited and the government facilitates them on a priority basis.

Among the Central Asian Republic countries, Kazakhstan is a unique republic that introduced a very popular program called “Nurly Kosh” (Blessed and Bright Migration) in 2008 (Under Government Decree No. 1126) (Dautova, 2020). The initiative was basically to support the political and economic sustainability of the country. The statistics of the migration of ethnic Kazakhs in 2020, displays that around five million Kazakhs are living outside and they are spread in 43 countries (World Association of Kazakh). This program attracted highly professionals who are serving in the various parts of the world. The task of the program is to support in terms of providing an allowance for the purchase of a house, reimbursement of relocation costs, and social support who returned to Kazakhstan.

Under the Policy of Migration-2000, in the three different regions of the country, government has created three macro-Zones i.e. North, South and Central Zone. These zones mainly are created to settle the return Kazakh ethnic people from various part of the world. Further, Kazakh government has spent around 1318.6 million US dollars from 2009 to 2011.

The centres located in the three zones are assigned the duty to facilitate the returns in various ways such as legal and psychological assistance, employment, vocational courses, training and also language courses.

Under the “Nurly Kosh” and another initiative of the Kazakh government approximately 313,256 ethnic Kazakh families received a status of return and received preferential housing from 1991-2020. Under this policy and program, the returns (size of family five people) can get a time allowance of 5866 US Dollar amount for buying a house or reimburse family relocation expenditures.

**Table 9** – Ethnic Kazakh families returned in the year 2019

| Country         | Number of people | Per cent   |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|
| China           | 7326             | 41.5       |
| Uzbekistan      | 7074             | 40.1       |
| Turkmenistan    | 1152             | 6.5        |
| Mongolia        | 1095             | 6.2        |
| Russia          | 313              | 1.8        |
| Other countries | 701              | 3.9        |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>17661</b>     | <b>100</b> |

Source: <https://www.pragueprocess.eu/en/countries/419-republic-of-kazakhstan>

This Table provides information about the number of people from different countries and the percentages of people who returned to Kazakhstan. China has the highest number of people with 7,326, accounting for 41.5% of the total. Uzbekistan follows closely with 7,074 people, making up 40.1% of the total. Turkmenistan has 1,152 people, which is 6.5% of the total. Mongolia has 1,095 people, representing 6.2% of the total. Russia has the smallest number with 313 people, making up 1.8% of the total. Other countries have 701 people, contributing 3.9% to the total. In total, there are 17,661 people in the dataset.

According to Leila Delovarova (2020), ‘The IOM mission in Kazakhstan provides assistance to persons who have returned to their homeland, under this assistance the return migrants get financial, psychological, and other support in Kazakhstan. Further it also covers aspects of rehabilitation and reintegration, with subsequent monitoring over the course of a calendar year from the moment of arrival of return migrants (Delovarova, 2020, p. 10).

In most cases, most immigrants within the context of the resettlement program of ethnic Kazakhs to their ancestral homeland receive a quota to reside in the northern regions of Kazakhstan. This decision by the Kazakh government is due to the expectation that birth rates will decrease in these regions, which are subject to what is known as the “demographic trough”. During the Soviet era, ethnic Russians, Germans, and Ukrainians primarily lived in the northern and eastern regions, with the ethnic Kazakh population accounting for no more than 25% of the total population. After the collapse of the USSR, most ethnic Germans migrated to Germany, while Russians began moving to Russia. This situation was exacerbated by the predominantly agricultural nature of the northern regions of Kazakhstan, where many villages and farming communities experienced significant population loss during the economic downturn as people migrated to urban areas. The Kazakh government has decided to address the issue by relocating Kazakh citizens from other areas where overpopulation is a concern. In the early years after the country’s independence, many ethnic Kazakhs who lived in China, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey began to migrate to their historical homeland independently. The resettlement program for ethnic Kazakhs aimed to achieve various objectives.

Firstly, it sought to address historical injustices. At the beginning of the previous century, many Kazakhs had been forced to leave their homes due to hunger and repression as a result of Soviet policies.

The program aimed to correct this situation by facilitating the return of these displaced individuals to their ancestral lands.

Secondly, the program sought to resolve the demographic imbalance that had arisen due to the mass migration of people from northern, central, and eastern Kazakhstan. This imbalance led to those regions becoming economically underdeveloped and dependent on subsidies. By encouraging the return of Kazakhs, the program hoped to alleviate this issue.

Thirdly, from a political perspective, the program aimed to prevent potential separatist movements and increase the size of the state's founding ethnic group. By bringing back Kazakhs from abroad, the government hoped to strengthen its position and maintain stability.

The resettlement program has faced numerous difficulties, primarily due to the reluctance of the majority of returnees to return to areas where the standard of living differs significantly from the standard of living in the western and southern regions. These problems, which arose as a result of the economic downturn caused by various factors, including the war in Ukraine, economic sanctions, pandemics, and other natural disasters, forced the Government of Kazakhstan to reduce subsidies for returnees. In addition, after several incidents, the Government had to tighten restrictions on issuing passports to migrants, which created bureaucratic obstacles. The Government explained this as a desire to ensure national security. All these factors play a role in shaping Astana's resettlement policy.

### **Case-2: Uzbekistan**

Uzbekistan is ranked in first position in terms of the highest population in the CARs countries, with seventeen per cent below poverty line people and occupied third position in the region after Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Its migration outflows and inflows are 13648 (OF) and 1105 (IF). Uzbekistan is going through a difficult time in terms of unemployment and poverty in the region. Due to a lack of adequate educational and technological infrastructure, unskilled migrants are going outside the country. From independence to this time, no such migration policy or law has been enacted by the government of Uzbekistan. It was the first time in 2016 the president of Uzbekistan announced a program for attracting highly skilled Uzbeks scattered around the world. In continuation of the announcement, Uzbek president Shavkat Mirziyoyev during his visit to New York City in the USA, met the Uzbek group in 2017. He invited them to work in Uzbekistan, and the government made clear that it would encourage its

citizens who are trained abroad to return and share their expertise and international experience. There are no official statistics on how many people who were born in Uzbekistan are now living abroad, but many analysts believe the number is in the several million. Despite the outflow of unskilled migrants to various countries of the world, the motive of the announcement is that there are still thousands of Uzbeks working abroad who have completed advanced education and are employed in high-skilled jobs. The new government of Uzbekistan hopes that at least some of these highly skilled Uzbeks will return to help reform the country.

In 2018, the Government of Uzbekistan came up with a strategy and founded a Council to invite 300 people of Uzbek origin who live mostly in developed countries and work in various fields such as law, finance, medicine, economics, and academia. The Council's main goal is to help in developing reform programs in the political, economic, and social spheres in Uzbekistan, including creating an overarching development model to extend until 2035. Uzbekistan also established the El-Yurt Umidi Foundation to train specialists abroad and engage in dialogue with expat Uzbeks. At the same time, the government adopted a concept paper that declared as its goal, among others, "attracting compatriots from among highly qualified specialists to work in government organizations."

The study conducted by Sherzod Eraliev (2019), on a new policy of the Government of Uzbekistan, findings of the study highlighted that "At the same time, the widespread old-style bureaucracy, corruption, a lack of real economic and political reforms (including public administration reforms), and low living standards were the main factors that made others hesitant to return. Some expressed hope that the government would speed up its economic and political reforms and that the level of bureaucracy would diminish soon" (Eraliev, 2019:30).

### **Case-3: Tajikistan**

Tajikistan is one of the poorest countries in Asia, with twenty-six per cent of the population residing below the poverty line. It is the third largest remittance-dependent (in 2013, first in remittance-dependent) in the world with a 7.6 % unemployment rate, and remittance contributes thirty-three per cent of total GDP. The country mainly depends on the remittance of migrants, and since independence in 2020, it has received 2.2 billion dollars. According to Khiradmand Sheraliev (2021), "thirty per cent of Tajikistan's GDP, and in absolute terms, it is about \$ 2.5 billion." From 2013 to 2020, Tajik labour

migrants transferred more than \$ 15 billion to their homeland through official means (Sheraliev, 2021).

The rate of outflow the person from Tajikistan to Kazakhstan, and Russia is very high among the Central Asian countries, 54000 (2019-20), and the inflow was 40000 (2019-20). The Tajik migrants return from their destination countries due to season; most of the Tajik migrants work out of the country as labourers at construction sites. During the winter season, the construction is because of less need for manual labourers (IOM, 2014: 20). Also, expensive treatment in Russia and other countries, pushes them to return to their native country.

#### **Case-4: Kyrgyzstan**

Kyrgyzstan is one of the poorest countries in the Central Asian region after Tajikistan, with twenty-five per cent of the population residing below the poverty line. Around 700000 migrants from Kyrgyzstan work abroad (Sagynbekova, 2017: 5). Out of the international migrants, Kyrgyzstan has the highest share of women in migration (around 40%), while other countries such as Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, women share is around 20%. The remittances accounted for 30.3% of Kyrgyzstan's GDP, making it the world's second most remittance-dependent economy after Tajikistan (Sagynbekova, 2017, p. 6).

Kyrgyzstan joined the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in 2015. Among four labour force surplus countries of Central Asian countries (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). This move of the Kyrgyz government hoped this would resolve many issues faced by undocumented labour migrants and provide more open and efficient access to employment opportunities and social welfare (Sagynbekova, 2017, p. 7).

Thus, Kyrgyzstan's high poverty rates, significant reliance on migrant labour, and remittance-driven economy underscore its socio-economic challenges, prompting strategic integration into the EAEU to address migration issues and foster access to employment and welfare.

#### **Challenges before the return migrants to their homeland country**

Most of the migrants from Central Asian Countries (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) are unskilled labourers, and they migrate from their homeland countries to their destinations for earning. The family members of these migrants depend on their remittance. In the case of Tajikistan, the GDP of the country depends on remittance. The high poverty and unemployment

rates have negatively impacted the country's development process. It can be said that it is the psychological aspect of the migrants if they are forcefully sent to their native country. In Tajikistan, there is a lack of policy or plan for the return migrants. Every year half a million Tajik labourers move out for employment in the country. Out of them, ninety per cent move to Russia, the remaining Kazakhstan, and other countries (Zotova, 2023, p. xi). The study on return migrants conducted by Zotova (2023), highlighted the issue related to the "mental health of the return migrants. It is unfortunate for the labourer who works for other countries and gets sick and due to out-of-pocket expenses of medical care in destination countries. They return with serious diseases which impact their family and the economy of the country" (Zotova, 2023).

Another challenge for migrants, as well as the origin country, when migrants return from the destination country due to political, social, and economic factors is the nonavailability of sound legal support for the returnees. Only Kazakhstan has a special provision for return migrants, but other countries of Central Asia do not have legal support for return migrants.

The most important aspect is the economic factor, whatever reason for the return to their native countries, where the economic aspect is very serious, especially in the case of Tajikistan, the GDP of the country depends on remittance. Since 2025, Russia's policy of re-entry bans, strict laws for acquiring citizenship, and permits for labour have impacted the flow of migration.

According to Rezantsev (Ryazantsev et al., "the Government of Tajikistan merely has any special programs for the reintegration of returning migrants due to lack of funds and lack of experience in this area. Most returning migrants are forced to solve their problems on their own or resort to the help of their families and relatives. The government is not interested in the massive return of labor migrants, since the increase in their number worsens the socio-economic situation of the population and the general state of the labor market" (Ryazantsev et al, 2021, p. 173).

The Tajik government has implemented a program for the reintegration of returning migrants, providing professional training after training jobs and entrepreneurship to them. The most problematic situation in Tajikistan is the population growth, and every year, 200000 youths join the labour force. They are moving abroad for jobs. In Tajikistan, there is no such mechanism for re-employment. The government introduced such paid training

courses/programs for the return migrants but no such assurance for the jobs. Government data, Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment of the population, in 2018, 1462 return migrants have received training but among them, only 812 have got permanent jobs.

The return migration impacted the family members' returns negatively. According to Thieme in Kyrgyzstan, "The remittances were seen as a positive opportunity to invest in good nutrition and education for children and therefore a better future (Thieme, 2011, p. 13)." But after returning, they face problems on this front. The return migrant's investment increasing in the urban area, and it is affecting the rural–urban balances.

In short, the migration of unskilled labourers from Central Asian countries significantly impacts both the migrants and their home countries. Remittances form a crucial lifeline for families left behind, especially in Tajikistan, where they contribute significantly to the GDP. However, challenges abound for returnees, including mental health issues, lack of legal support, and limited reintegration programs. Economic dependency on remittances underscores the urgency for comprehensive policies addressing the well-being of migrants and their families.

## Conclusion

The Central Asian countries have started their economic and social reforms through massive

policies and plans from coming out of the Soviet legacy tag, a new model of the governing political system. The initial first decade of independence was challenging for certain sectors such as education, infrastructure, location of the industries, common language during the soviet time, the civil war situation in CARs, returning the Russian skilled population from CARs, etc. Since independence, all five Central Asian countries have experienced massive transformations in economic, political, administration, technological, and social spheres. Migration in the Central Asian region due to economic, infrastructural, unskilled manpower, and educational constraints. The economy of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan is based on remittances from Russia and Kazakhstan. But in recent years, the leaders of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have taken some policy decisions in terms of migration. These policies have impacted the migration patterns in regions, and new phenomena have appeared in CARs, i.e. return migration in the name of ethnic linkages and attractive plans for the indigenous ethnicities to return to their own countries and serve the nations. However, the inflow of the return migration is not as desired by the CARs leadership. It can be said that it is early to conclude that within one and half decades of the reforms is not much time to reach a conclusion. All these reforms are at the infancy stage, but the fruit of all these reforms depends on time and space along with will power of the political leadership.

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**Автор туралы мәлімет:**

Говинд Кумар Инахия – қауымдастырылған профессор, Ресей және Орталық Азияны зерттеу орталығы, Халықаралық зерттеулер мектебі, Джавахарлал Неру Университеті (Үндістан, Нью-Дели қ., e-mail: [govindkumar@jnu.ac.in](mailto:govindkumar@jnu.ac.in))

**Information about author:**

Govind Kumar Inakhiya – Associate Professor, Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (India, New Delhi, e-mail: [govindkumar@jnu.ac.in](mailto:govindkumar@jnu.ac.in))

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