



Some of the recent initiatives for the welfare of the NRKs and returnees merit a brief mention as a reflection of the Government's concern and commitment for their welfare and rehabilitation.

### **Awareness campaign on safe migration**

It is widely recognised that migration is one of the most significant global phenomena and challenges of this century. This is especially relevant to Kerala, as a major supplier of labour to the foreign job market. The economy of Kerala relies heavily on remittances. Over the years, migration has become an extremely complex process and the migrant labourers of Kerala experience extreme hardship and exploitation at every stage of migration. Successive governments have taken various legislative measures to streamline the sector. Past experience suggests that legal steps are only effective when the necessary information is made available to potential migrants, their families and common people.

In recent years, the Government of Kerala has realised the facts and several important steps have been taken to improve the governance of migration. There remain many challenges ahead and much room for improvement. One of the most burning problems facing by migrants is widespread lack of awareness about the complexities of migration. The large number of Kerala Diaspora, especially from the Gulf has high hopes for formal and credible mechanism to provide information on safe migration procedures. Lack of awareness regarding formal sources of information has made potential migrants easy prey to fraud and cheating by unscrupulous recruitment agents.

### **Pre-departure orientation programme**

The protection of migrant workers can be enhanced through better training programmes and information dissemination about migration. 'Pre-departure' for migrant workers begins long before the actual journey. 'Pre-departure orientation training' aims to provide practical knowledge and protection skills to those who are in the middle of processing migration. This includes measures and strategies that could be used by the migrants to maximise the benefits of migrations and reduce potential dangers. It seeks to sensitise the migrants about the cultural milieu and legal rights and obligations in the destination country.

NORKA-ROOTS has launched its first Pre-Departure Orientation Programme through a State level inauguration on 15th December, 2006 at Durbar Hall Thiruvananthapuram by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala in the Hon'ble presence of the UAE Labour Minister Dr. Ali Bin Abdullah Al' Kaabi. This programme is intended to make our overseas job aspirants aware about general job situations abroad and to impart essential information relating to visa, emigration rules,

employment contract, customs regulations, travel formalities etc. Similar Orientation Programmes were conducted at Ernakulam, Kozhikode and Palakkad.

One day workshops for overseas job seekers were also conducted in association with district administrations at Kasaragod, Kannur, Malappuram, Thrissur and Kottayam

### **Skill Upgradation Programme- Combating with arising challenge**

In the early years of migration Keralalites including illiterates and people were not exposed to the exigencies of foreign employment considered foreign countries especially gulf countries as the place to get an occupation. Unemployment in the state is the prime cause that has been forcing majority of Kerala youth to work abroad. A large number of emigrants accepted jobs abroad regardless of their education abroad. In the seventies there was spurt with number of emigrants. They have been engaged in various capacities including manual jobs. Ever so many people who reached foreign countries turned the bread winners of their houses and their home land.

This aspect of migration in the initial period, the situation has changed over the years. The number of educated people, who established their occupation abroad, has increased. However, most of the emigrants were unskilled workers. Workers with multiple skills are urgent and indispensable requirement in the overseas job market.

It is therefore important to upgrade the skills of the young workforce who are seeking employment abroad. Realizing this, NORKA has decided to provide a support system to provide sufficient training and orientation to prospective emigrants. Skill Upgradation Programme focuses on upgrading the skill of young Keralites workforce to meet the challenges in the overseas employment market. The programme aims to bring knowledge, deep functional expertise, and a practical approach to building capabilities and delivering real impact.