



# Impact of Gulf Migration in the Economic Life of Muslims in Kerala

**Sunija A.L.**

Research Scholar

Dept. of Islamic History

University College, Trivandrum

E-mail: shajisunija15@gmail.com

## Abstract

One of the most significant periods in the history of the social and economic development of Muslims in Kerala has been started with the West Asia migration particularly to the Middle East. State of Kerala is at forefront in sending its peoples to the Gulf nations. Today the state economy of a large extent depends on the remittance of its emigrant group. Particularly in every aspect the economic life it reflects across Kerala. Currently there are 2.28 million Keralites works in Gulf nation. This resulted a huge transformation in the socio- economic life of the state. Even though there are many sources of revenue in the remittance from the Gulf nation still remain as a backbone in many districts of Kerala.

**Keywords:** Migration Mecca Madinah Hajj Umrah

## Introduction

According to Dolly Sunny “Migration naturally occurs where ever there is large-scale unemployment particularly among those who have received education, but are unable to find gain full employment in their natural surroundings and are aware of the potential for securing employment in a more developed place or country”.<sup>1</sup> The quest for a better life has been a central theme throughout human history. One of the prominent elements of the prosperity of the community has been regarded as migration. People move away from their homes in search of greater chances for survival and a higher quality of life. Internal or external migration



flows have an impact on a country's other development metrics, including income, health, and education. Since the beginning of the spice trade, Kerala and the Gulf nations have had a close association. From the beginning of the fourth century BC, Arab traders were the visitors to Kerala for sell and bring spices. The *Malayalee's* frequently travelled to the Middle East with the Arab traders in order to expand their commerce. The migration to the Gulf as a result of this trading relationship is a significant factor in Kerala's economic development. The Middle East's resource curves are introduced by the tale of enormous labour migration. Today known as the Gulf nations, in March 1908 after years of effort and failure.<sup>2</sup> The largest nation on the Arabian Peninsula is Saudi Arabia. Mecca and Medina, two Muslim holy towns, are situated in Saudi Arabia, often known as the "country of the Holy Mosques." As a result, Muslims are more likely to choose to seek work in Saudi Arabia. This is because they have the chance to go to these sacred locations and do the required Hajj and Umrah. Every Muslim has a dream of travelling to Mecca and Medina for solely religious reasons. Kerala Muslims are not an exception either. From the early inception of Islam and its preaching in Arabia, it spread to the Kerala area. Islam was peacefully introduced to the Kerala area. As a result, Muslims in Kerala enjoy visiting Mecca and Medina whenever they get the chance. Due to the impending unemployment, the Muslim community begins to consider moving to another nation and begins to travel to the Gulf.

Religion is virtually always impacted by migration. This is the case because when individuals move to a new location, their daily routines change, and even the most firmly held religious traditions are inevitably affected by new experiences. Saudi Arabia has been the main destination for Muslim immigrants, Majority of the laborers of SA are from Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, and other adjacent Arab nations. Pilgrimages enabled each civilization's religious and secular cultures blend together. For Islam, it became extremely crucial. Each year, thousands of pilgrims from all around the Muslim world travels to Mecca. This is also a reason for the Muslims migrate to Gulf countries.

Middle Eastern nations saw a socioeconomic transformation as a result of industrialization. The necessity for additional foreign employees to meet demand prompted people from India, particularly Kerala, to migrate to the gulf, which led to this development. The first migration from Kerala to the Persian Gulf began in the 1960s.<sup>3</sup> Due to a high unemployment rate at the time, Kerala and the rest of India were experiencing difficult economic conditions. In order to provide for their families, many began to go to the Gulf countries. For civil works such as drilling



sites and road building construction in the 1970s, Workers from Kerala in the Gulf got more pay than they would have in India. With their large incomes, the majority of them sent a salary back to their relatives in Kerala. These prosperous immigrants serve as role models for Kerala's youth. In order to provide for their families, many began to go to the Gulf countries.

Gulf Emigrants are mostly concerned about their family members. According to numerous other surveys, almost half of the emigrants are single at the time of their first move to the Gulf nations. The proportion of married immigrants is greater in Malappuram district, where around 46 percent of emigrants were married at the time of their first move, according to a survey.<sup>4</sup>

The effects of migration on individuals, families, and communities vary greatly. As a consequence of the relocation, they have been able to improve their professional skills to build a large home, educate their children, and establish numerous businesses. Another significant consequence of Gulf migration is the diversification of family and community levels. In the best-case scenario, employment-related out migration can result in occupational mobility, a decrease in unemployment, an increase in construction, and the establishment of new businesses.

As a result of the economic development in the Gulf countries and prize hike in oil costs, in terms of both numbers and remittances, *Malayalee* migrants made up the bulk of Indian migrants today. *Malayalee*'s make up every fourth Indian in the Gulf. The majority of citizens of Malappuram have resided outside of India. Following the 1973–1974 oil price boom in the Gulf nations, extensive infrastructure and economic development projects were planned and launched, including the expansion of transportation and communication utilities. In addition to highly qualified technical professionals, these programmers increased the demand for semiskilled and unskilled personnel as well. Consequently, the primary overflow has been to the Gulf nations during the past many decades of Indian migrant laborers and other individuals.<sup>5</sup>

Large numbers of employment opportunities were established in the Middle Eastern nations due to the region's oil-rich areas and a dearth of trained workers in the industrial sector. By the destinations like Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, or the United States. The extent of the exodus and its effects on Kerala's state and society made it unique. Actually, among the refugees from Kerala, particularly from the Northern section of Malappuram Kannur and Thrissur, had a seasonable number of immigrants from India. During the latter quarter of the 20th century, Kerala's economy benefited greatly from the foreign remittances that Gulf migrants



sent to their homeland, and it also saw the emergence of a new consumer culture. Through the acquisition of decent homes and improved educational opportunities for the children, migration also helped immigrants and their families to enhance their socioeconomic status. There are around 3.5 million *Malayalee's* living in the Middle East <sup>6</sup> some of them have even migrated there with their families. These individuals are the main producers of Kerala's GDP.

*Malayalee's* are also employed in Gulf nations such as Saudi Arabia. UAE Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain. Large-scale remittance flows, a commoditized economy, conspicuous spending, and large-scale migration have all become part of Kerala society. Kerala's social and cultural landscape, as well as remittances, and Kerala households' high levels of consumption are well recognized worldwide. In Kerala few years back knowing in the name of "Gulf Karan" has virtually become a status symbol.

### **The Statistics of Gulf Migration in the year 1980 from Kerala before the emergence of Kasaragod, Pattanamtitta and Wayanad districts**

District	Number of Gulf Migrants per 1,000 Population	Migrants as Percentage of Openly Unemployed	Remittances as Percentage of Net Domestic Product
Trivandrum	8.1	10.3	24.3
Quilon	6.7	7.8	19.0
Alleppey	7.2	11.4	24.3
Kottayam	2.4	4.1	7.3
Idukki	0.3	0.8	0.8
Ernakulam	1.5	2.3	3.2
Trissur	15.5	33.2	47.0
Palakkad	3.4	7.1	11.7
Malappuram	14.5	55.3	61.9
Kozhikode	6.5	13.2	18.2
Kannur	8.3	24.5	23.3
Kerala	7.3	13.3	21.5

Source: Department of Economics and Statistics, Survey on Housing and Employment 1980, Thiruvananthapuram.

Note; Pathanamthitta, Wayanad, Kasaragod district were not existence in 1980. <sup>7</sup>

Of these, Pathanamthitta, and Kasaragod districts have a large number of migrations.

From the table given above, Malappuram district has the highest number of unemployed migrants and Kottayam has the lowest. Likewise, Remittances



as Percentage of Net Domestic Product are higher in Malappuram and Lower in Idukki. Show this table that the volume of remittances received in seven district of Kerala was very large.

We have already known that Migration is as old as human history. It is a ubiquitous demographic phenomenon which results in population redistribution. The massive population involvements of modern times have wider social, economic, political, demographic and ecological implications. Economic factors are the main driver of voluntary migration. The Push and Pull Factors are the most significant economic drivers of migration. The poor economic conditions, which lead to economic hardship or a lack of prospects for progress and drive individuals to leave their region in pursuit of a better way of life, are referred to as the push factors or the impelling forces. According to a survey conducted by the ILO, decreased wage levels are the primary driving force behind workers leaving the agricultural sector. In practically every nation, agricultural incomes are lower than those in other economic sectors. Pull factors are things that entice people to move to a place, such jobs and other economic possibilities, amenities, and facilities. People are drawn to specific places by opportunities for better jobs, greater pay, modern amenities, etc.<sup>8</sup> The process of industrialization, technical development, and other cultural changes that characterize the emergence of modern civilization in practically all areas of the world are closely related to migration from the rural to the city. The pull forces are primarily to blame for the movement of people with professional and highly educated credentials from developing nations to wealthy countries. Pull forces have also been a significant contributor to the mass migration of unskilled labour from emerging nations to the oil-rich Middle East countries. It is believed that today's biggest factor influencing international migration is pay disparities.

The survey discovered that migrant families had significantly greater monthly incomes as compared to non-migrant households. The migrant households spent more on food, clothes, entertainment, education, social activation, and communication than other households. Additionally, households increased their expenditures on durable items, wedding's function and other celebrations. Another important shift of migration is the development of vocational education and training for skills in the labour market as a result of the Gulf possibilities. Unemployed youngsters started enrolling in courses that helped them gain the skills needed for jobs in west Asia in order to immigrate to the Gulf. Private organizations developed a variety of vocational training programmes to educate young people. These include paramedical courses, automobile operation courses, welding courses, computer operation courses,



culinary courses, tailoring courses, and training relating to building. This has led to a significant shift in Kerala's system of vocational education. This phenomenon augmented the revenue stream of these private entrepreneurs.

### Findings

Muslims of the Kerala are the migrant groups than any other community and among these mostly are males. There was a slight increase of migrants in every year. The percentage of migrant women in Muslim community were very mergers. This migration enriched the socio-economic life of the community in Kerala. The Gulf migration also helped in reducing the poverty line of Kerala.

### Conclusion

The sum of Migration was the overall development which took place in the social economic life of Kerala. Gulf money made Kerala as developed state. Today Kerala is very forward in the field of health, education and telecommunication system. It is visible in every nuke and corner of Kerala. No doubt the migration to Gulf countries flows in every aspect of life. Bungalow houses, shopping complexes, educational institutions, and professional education all flourished as a result of Gulf Migration. The development is visible from cooperation to panchayat level and from urban to rural areas. Many employment opportunities were created in the state itself. Due to the construction boom and scarcity of labour, labours from many other states of India, migrated to Kerala. The Social activities and standard of living were also increased many folds. Banking and insurance sector were also developed like anything.

### References

- 1 Dolly Sunny Kerala capital or Maharashtra; Dilemma of Educated Keralites for livelihood, publisher serials publications 2008
- 2 Ibid ; Dolly Sunny
- 3 Daniel Naujoks, Emigration, Immigration and Diaspora relations in India October 2009
- 4 Jaya S Anand [2002] Self Help Groups in Empowering Women; case study of selected SHGS and NHGS discussion paper No 38
- 5 Ramachandran, Sudha [2013] Saudi Nita Kath law Trouble for Indian expats.
- 6 Op.cit; Daniel Naujoks, Emigration, Immigration and Diaspora relations in India October 2009
- 7 Department of Economics and Statistics 1980
- 8 Francis Cherunilam, "Migration, Causes. Correlates, Consequences Trends and Policies" Himalaya publishing House, Bombay 1987