

Migration of Muslims from Kerala to Gulf Countries, evidences for forced migration from the villages of Malappuram in Kerala, India

The struggles I had to undergo the next one week! Every Gulf worker who had no relative in the Gulf to support him will have a similar story. I finally fixed up the total by mortgaging the house and the little amount of gold Sainu had as jewellery, and by collecting small amounts from other sand miners and by borrowing from everyone I knew. Yes, 'fix up' best describes it. Suffice to say I gave my friend's brother-in-law the money the night before he left. (I could have asked Sainu's brothers in Abu Dhabi, but she refused to let me. She resented them for not helping me till then.)

Two months passed, months of waiting and dreaming. And there was another round of borrowing. I had to arrange the remaining ten for the agent. Even that was fixed up. Meanwhile, I dreamt a host of dreams. Perhaps the same stock dreams that the 1.4 million Malayalis in the Gulf had when they were in Kerala—gold watch, fridge, TV, car, AC, tape recorder, VCP, a heavy gold chain. I shared them with Sainu as we slept together at night. "I don't need anything, ikka. Do return when you have enough to secure the life of our child (son or daughter?). We don't need to accumulate wealth like my brothers. No mansion either. A life together. That's all." Maybe the wife of every man who is about to leave for the Gulf tells him the same thing. Even so, they end up spending twenty or thirty years of their lives there. And for what reason?

(from the Academy award winning Novel Goat Days, Binyamin. 2008. *Goat Days*, Penguin books 2011)

Though Indian subcontinent was historically connected with the Persian Gulf Countries, there was never a large migration of labor until the 1970s. Subsequently, huge number of labour from India started to migrate, out of which migration from the southern state of Kerala attracted much attention because of the large number of migrants from the state. Migration from Kerala to Gulf Countries is one of the important studied component within the migration and development literature in India. However, even when Muslims are one of the leading migratory community, studies on the various aspects of them is considerably less. In this context, this paper investigates some of the basic questions about the reasons of migration of Muslims from Malabar to Gulf Countries. Migration of Muslims from Malabar is very significant due to various reasons. Muslims from Malabar had their own reasons for the migration to Gulf Countries apart from other reasons that we find in the literature regarding migration. Various factors within community and outside have forced the Muslim youth to migrate and remain at the destination countries to which they have migrated.

On the basis of the filed work that is carried out in a Muslim populated village in Malappuram district, the paper argues that, the larger causes or the reasons those were explained and given to us in the literature and studies about the causes of migration to Gulf countries is not sufficient to understand the migration of Muslims from the state. Considering the larger contexts and socio -economic and political situations that have existed during the initial and peak period of migration is also very important. Inquiring from the larger learnings that the literature provide about migration from the state of Kerala to Gulf countries and the socio-economic and political situations that existed in during 1970's and 1980's and the conditions of Muslims in Malabar in the wake of these periods, especially poverty and unemployment has to be seen as one of the very crucial reason for why people had to migrate anyhow to Gulf Countries, especially to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Youth have migrated from Malabar by even selling the gold that their mothers or wives have, selling whatever small ladened property they have, borrowing from available sources and even taking loans or money from moneylenders. They were never educated or skilled to get higher paid professional employments in the destination countries and they had to satisfy on the unskilled, semi skilled lower paid jobs. Rampant unemployment throughout the last three decades, Umra and free visa facility to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, dowry and expensive marriages existed in the village, the modernization of the occupation of Oossan castes and demand for the hairdressers, the extreme aspirations and the dream of Gulf from the suffering life and poverty at the village, family,village and other net works were the crucial

reasons which made their migration to Gulf Countries rather than many other explanations given to us. Its evident that, there is noting much religious about the why Muslims migrate from here to Gulf countries, but the economic reasons behind those comes out when one go for a deep analysis of the socio-economic and other conditions of the migrants. Thus, the migration to Gulf countries from the villages here in Malappuram has to be argued as a forced migration.

Gulf migration as forced migration

Kerala has been in the forefront of sending laborers to the Gulf countries for the last three decades. The impacts of this huge migration of labor from the state and their remittances have been the back born of the state's economy. It has changed the face of the state in the almost all walks of life. According to the first Kerala Migration Survey, there are 1.5 million Keralites live outside India and they sent more than 4,000 million a year by way of remittances and three- quarters of a million former emigrants have come back. According to the most recent available estimates of the emigrants to Gulf from the state of Kerala shows that out of the 668,876 international migrants 641.387, migrants in the gulf countries accounted for the 95.89 per cent and international migrants other than Gulf countries accounted only for 4.11 per cent and 94.8 per cent of the migrants were males. It has been about three decades now, when the massive labor migration started from the state. However, Gulf migration is not considered as an actual forced migration in the literataure that has been coming out, hence, its important to look the theoretical frame work in which migration to the Gulf countreis from Kerala is also established as forced migration. First of all, distinction has to be made between volnetory and and forced migration. The distinction between voluntary and forced migration seems to be clear, drawing a line between (a) the voluntary decision of a person to migrate for one or, as is often the case, several motives; and (b) a person being forced to migrate in the interest of personal safety, motivated by differing types of force (Düvell 2006: 14-16). This is especially the case when distinguishing between those who are seeking employment or educational opportunities and others who are fleeing persecution and violence.

Forced migration is defined by international law that entitles those who have a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion to a set of rights and to international protection. On closer scrutiny, however, the line between forms of forced and voluntary migration becomes

blurred. The truth is that forced migrants not only include refugees, but also asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs), whose status is not as well defined as those of refugees. Furthermore, migration is most often motivated by complex, mixed and shifting motives. Such motives render a clear distinction between, for example, the voluntary decision to migrate for educational reasons or forced migration due to persecution difficult to maintain. Even UNHCR, which sets forced migrants apart from other migrants, and especially refugees as protected by the 1951 Refugee Convention, has turned to the notion that 'human mobility is growing in scale, scope and complexity' (Crisp 2008: 3), while stressing that 'people are prompted [to] leave their own country by a combination of fears, uncertainties, hopes and aspirations which can be very difficult to unravel' (Crisp 2008: 5).

As is increasingly recognised, the mixed nature of migratory movements shows that voluntary and forced migration are often part of the same phenomenon. Migratory movements may include people who are seeking employment or educational opportunities, who want to reunite with family members or people who are fleeing persecution, conflict or violence in their countries of origin (UNHCR 2012a). Thus, UNHCR indeed maintains its position that it is possible and necessary to identify refugees as a special category of people protected under international law but has, at the same time, become engaged in the broader migration discourse, arguing that often there is no clear distinction between forms of forced and voluntary migration when refugees and other migrants move alongside each other (Crisp 2008: 2, 4, 5). Furthermore, when a migrant moves due to economic motives, in what is generally considered as voluntary migration, the question arises as to whether the person's economic circumstances might have forced him or her to migrate. As Turton has correctly observed, '[i]t turns out, on closer inspection, that most migrants make their decision to migrate in response to a complex set of external constraints' (Turton 2003: 5). He therefore prefers to speak of a continuum as introduced by Anthony Richmond (1994: 59) and Nicholas Van Hear (1998: 44). While Richmond defines a continuum running from proactive to reactive migration, Van Hear looks at the range between voluntary and involuntary migration, and migrants' varying degrees of choice and options (Turton 2003: 6). By its very nature, forced migration entails a certain vulnerability of the migrant. When fleeing due to a fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, the migrant may have lost his or her property, job or social network. This, in combination with a lack of protection or an insecure status that limits the access to services such as education or health care, may lead to food insecurity, weak health conditions and social marginalisation. This is theoretical context that we are going to discuss about the migration from the Kerala to Gulf Countries.

Data and methodology

Data for this particular research has been collected from various sources, a village was selected from the Malappuram district which has the largest number of migrants as well as return migrants from Gulf countries, as well as the district with high Muslim population. Vellayur village was selected on the basis of its high prevalence of migration to gulf countries , its backwardness, Muslim population concentration and one of the least known and least written about or studied village. The village is divided into 14 wards and spread across three Gram Panchayat's. Around 10 households were selected from each ward with the help of the ward members of the respective wards for the household's survey. The households survey was conducted in 128 households from the village, out of which around 137 migrants including, the houses were either one member is currently working in any of the Gulf country, or currently on leave and staying at home during the leave or at least one member had lived and worked in any gulf country for at least more than two years. After the households survey data was collected from the village with a unstructured interview tool from different set of people from the village, like early migrants, current migrants, people who are on leave, returnees from different gulf countries , women who are left behind, their family members, old people from the village, social and political figures, and various other stake holders in the village from whom data could have gathered on socio economic and political details for the research. Interview with the key people like, local representatives, school teachers, women and other groups representatives, local bank officials, village and Gram Panchayat officials were also helped to get more dynamics and meanings of the migration to Gulf countries. Apart from that, the stay at in the village during the data collection, the ethnographic experiences and the personal observation of researcher in all of these from beginning to end have also contributed for the data. The books and other documents written on village are also been used as wherever is necessary, photos were also used as data which was taken by the researcher himself during the data collection process. Apart from the primary data, secondary data was also collected from, Kerala Migration Surveys of Center for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram. Economic and Statistic Department of the State Government, Vellayur village office and other available sources and literature.

Tools were developed for the particular purpose on the basis of objectives of the study to use for the data collection. Considerable number of data was collected using the household's survey schedule. Apart from that, unstructured interview guide with some set of general guide lines and directions was formulated to facilitate the in depth interview with the key

informants and in-depth interviews with the various stake holders and migrants in the village. Once households survey was completed, various other stake holders from whom there was possibilities to get data for the particular research was interviewed, about 25 people including migrants, returnees, women and other prominent data sources from the village were in depth interviewed. Apart from that, details and documents related to the village, Gram Panchayat, maps and other documents about the village, photo graphs were also collected according to the needs for the study. Collected data, both primary and secondary data was analyzed according to the objectives of the study. Data collected through the households survey was first sorted and cleaned then around 35 variables were identified for the different set of needs. To understand the factors that influenced migration of Muslims to gulf countries, variables like, educational qualification, job type at the time of migration, age, marital status, current job type in gulf, kind of visa and other variables were considered.

Migration takes place primarily because of the fluctuations in social, economic, political and various other fabrics at home land as well as the destination where people migrate. However there can also be other reasons which will also contribute for the migration of people from one place to another. As far as migration is concerned a single reason or only a set of reasons cannot be seen in isolation. There are layers of factors that contribute in different levels for a person or a group of people to migrate from one place to another. There could be individual reasons, family reasons, and community causes, national and international factors which will also contribute. The literature that dealt with the reasons or the factors that have contributed for the huge migration of people from Kerala to Gulf countries have suggested some of the dominant reasons, which I have already discussed in the first chapter. I will now try to reflect and find answers to the larger question which is important for this study, why Muslims are dominant among the migrants to gulf countries from Kerala. Do they also have reasons in particular which facilitated their migratory movement from the village to Gulf countries? Migration of Muslims from Kerala to Gulf countries has had different meanings and reason throughout the history. The literature has also acknowledged the historical connections that Muslims of this part of the world had with the Arab lands. However the social-economic and political fabrics, changes throughout the periods in which migration process have started, accelerated and slowing down are also extremely important. In the literature there are some broad arguments that are given as why Muslims outnumbered the others in terms of migration to Gulf countries. What have come out from the literature mainly as causes for migration from Kerala are the historical, ethnic and religious connections of Malabar coast to Arabia (Joseph 2007)

Apart from this glorified religious, ethnic and maritime relation with Arab countries, there is nothing much is available as to answer the question why Muslims outnumbered among the emigrants to Gulf. However it has also clearly mentioned that, among the factors that are associated with migration community is one of the strong one, where Muslims from the state has a high probability to be a migrant to Gulf countries. If one is a Muslim from the state of Kerala, the chances of emigration is 2.2(49 per cent) times the general average (22 per cent). On the other hand, their chance of out-migration¹(6.3 per cent) is only 0.55 times the general average (11.5 per cent) (Zachariah, Mathew 1999)². so it need to be further inquired that why Muslims hold such a high probability for migration and what are the reality of the reasons that studies have pointed out. Reasons for migration for the emigrants to gulf countries and the returnees in the village are diverse as higher wages than home, unemployment, better job prospectus, family, community and other networks.

Table : 1 Reasons for migration

Reasons	Migration status			Total	Count
	Currently in Gulf	On leave	Returnee		
Higher wage than home	27.0%	10.9%	2.2%	40.1%	55
Unemployment	25.5%	5.1%	2.9%	33.6%	46
Better job prospectus	15.3%	4.4%	2.2%	21.9%	30
Family net works	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	1
Community networks	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%	1
Others	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	4
Total	71.5%	21.2%	7.3%	100.0%	137

Source: field survey, 2013

Table 1 gives a picture of the individual reasons why they were migrated. Looking at the Individual level factors or causes why people have

1. Migration with in India.

2. Working paper on the results of the project, "Migration from Kerala: Social, Economic and Demographic Consequences". The Centre for Development Studies sponsored the research, and the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi.

migrated 40.1 per cent have responded that it was their aspiration that migrating to the Gulf countries will contribute them more wages since there is more values for the currency in gulf countries, those wages that they get will enable them to come out their diverse needs. However, there are other 33.6 per cent of the people who were unemployed or not engaged in any activity which contribute them financially or otherwise. Unemployment has been a reason for migration always; it was a reason in the initial year of migration from the village and it's still one of the dominant reasons why people go to gulf countries for work. It may not make sense for someone who is looking outside, and the dilemma will exists that why when people are unemployed they can migrate to some foreign countries. The answer is migrating to Gulf is a simple and viable opportunity for the Muslim youth than anything else in this part of India, it's not that they are getting gain full employment there or not in the destination countries but they migrate in search of that. For 21.9 per cent better job prospectus that they can have at the destination country was the reason why they have migrated. The question here is that, why one aspire for the better job prospectus, higher wages than home country or getting a good job in the gulf countries are indeed because of their financial reasons. This has to be further interrogated to understand what are the socio-economic and political forces that have also contributed. A remaining very less per cent of about 3 were responded that their reasons for migration was attributed the family, community networks and other reasons like, friends has sent visa to migrate or had gone in Umra visa first and then got settled in a good job and then caught by police and then deported and again went in other visa because the job was comparatively attractive. However by looking at the individual reasons will not give the real picture of the reasons of migration. If migrants had money and educational qualifications they could have migrated to other countries rather than in Gulf region, but here the migrants are largely going to Saudi Arabia alone. Is it mere a religious reason why people migrated to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia? Or is something else. This question takes us to the provision of cheapest and convenient Umra visa in which 32.1 per cent of the emigrants have migrated from the village.

Umra and Free visa to Saudi Arabia

Reasons for migration for the emigrants to Gulf countries and the returnees in the village are diverse as higher wages than home, unemployment, better job prospectus, family and other networks. The table 2 shows the kind of visa in which people have migrated to Gulf countries. Studies have not really shown the Visa details of the emigrants to Gulf countries from the state, Kind of visa that migrants went to gulf countries provide the reality of the migrants conditions. 39.4 per cent of the migrants have migrated to Gulf countries in free visa. Free visa are the visa's which are issued with out mentioning which type or category of job migrant has to do. These

visa were not generally monitored as other employment visas. About 32.1 per cent have migrated in Umra Visa which is issued by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the Muslims across the globe to come to kingdom and perform the Umra ritual.

Table 2: Kind of visa in which person went to gulf countries

	Migration status			Total	Count
	Currently in Gulf	On leave	Returne e		
Free visa	27.0%	9.5%	2.9%	39.4%	54
Umra visa	22.6%	6.6%	2.9%	32.1%	44
Employment visa	21.9%	5.1%	1.5%	28.5%	39
Total	71.5%	21.2%	7.3%	100.0%	137

Source: field survey, 2013

Umra visa has been a huge life line for the people here in the village; those who went in Umra visa worked for a while and then acquired a permanent work permit or visa. The migrants who have done this in the village are huge number. People were facilitated to go for Umra visa for a long time where people went for the short term visa and during the short span they have to carry out the Umra ritual and come back to the home states, but it was a practice until the 2009 people who go in the Umra visa were staying illegally and working in Saudi Arabia, mostly people worked as petty workers and small job and earned money, if once get caught in between they were deported to their home state or the national capital for free of cost. This has been very prevalent among the migrant of the village here, about 32.1 per cent of the total migrants have migrated to Saudi Arabia on this particular visa. Now, this can be considered as religious connection for the people in the village, however we have to further inquire that, why Umra visa and why not employment visa. First of all, the Umra visa is very cheap as compared to any other visa which will facilitate to go to Saudi Arabia. Secondly one has to professionally and educationally qualified to gain an employment visa. So here, the argument of religious reasons of considering Umra is becoming as an economic reason of very low economic status of the emigrants and their dependency of Umra visa, and this has facilitated the migration of a huge per cent of the migrants to Saudi Arabia from the village.

“At first, people use to go from here to Saudi Arabia in Umra visa, those days people who were working in employment visa was very rare. It’s not that people really want to do Umra ritual or religious but going to work there as illegal emigrant. I went in Umra visa and have been working for more than six years, by the time my brother also came in Umra visa only. Then I could manage to get an employment visa and work here. The life of an Umra emigrant is extremely difficult, he has to hide from police always, there were people who were living in rooms for years without not even going out months from the room to hide from police, once they get caught, it’s not that can be sent to home very soon, there are an extremely difficult life of prison which can be delayed for long depending on the number of inmates. People did all of these, only because poverty at home and for a better life, to marry off their sisters or to construct a home of once own” 28 .

(An early migrant from the village)

Another option for the migrants from the village who went to Saudi Arabia was free visa, free visa allows emigrants to come to Saudi Arabia not with very strict rules and other qualifications like one do not need to specify his or her profession during emigration. People who work in these visa's generally works in establishments, companies, or in the houses as helpers, sales men or driver and other supporting jobs. This is different from tightly-monitored visas which are used only for bringing workers for own use. In caparison with an employment visa, free visa is also less costly and not very difficult to acquire as education and skills are not a criteria for this visa as well. This is the reason why people takes free visa and migrate. Around 39.4 per cent of the migrants have migrated with the free visa and after government of Saudi has introduced the Nitaqat law, there is a huge fear, chaos and uncertainty created among the families and migrants in the village that the emigrants who are working on free visa will have to come back. In total 71.5 per cent of the emigrants have migrated from the village in Umra and Free visa. It clearly shows the reality of migration in the village. Why they had to go for these two categories of visa is because both are cheaper, convenient, educational

and other qualifications are not required etc. These two provisions have helped the migrants from the village than anything else.

Poverty and unemployment

Poverty among the Muslims, especially during later seventies and early eighties in Malabar has not come as one of the reason in any of the studies that was done on migration to Gulf countries from the state of Kerala substantially, however it's also been said that, in Gulf migration decades, the reduction of levels of poverty among Muslims are higher than any other population in the State even when considering factors other than migration to Gulf that must have contributed in reducing poverty as I mentioned in the introduction chapter. There for an inquiry in this line will give a good analysis of how poverty worked as a reason for the people to migrate to Gulf. Extreme poverty was one of the phenomena that was existed during sixties and seventies in the village and out of that people left to different cities like Mumbai, Madras and Calcutta in search of work, others straggled in the village without a job or a source for their livelihood. Migrant to other cities are the people who went to Gulf countries for work from the village. Those who were at Bombay went by ship to the Gulf Coast and the first migrant who went to Gulf from the village was migrated this way as he was working in a hotel in Mumbai. It can be interpreted that extreme poverty and hunger had existed during the early days of 1970's in the village, besides some of the Muslim families who had land and other resources, the condition of the huge majority of Dalits and Muslims was pathetic. So going to Gulf was an opportunity that was open to them, without knowing anything, they arranged money for the visa (Umra and other) by taking debts, loan or selling gold of their wives and mothers and went to Gulf countries.

Migration to Gulf countries is a costly affair as far as a common migrant from the village is concerned, they have to bear the cost of flight ticket, visa expense, expenses for work permit and other expenses. Table 3 gives a picture of the sources from which the emigrants raised their expenses during the emigration. Source of finance for the migration related expenses for migrants to migrate from the village to different countries shows that, there are people who raised finance for their expenses through the loan from banks, borrowings from different sources like friends and relatives, selling gold and landed property. There are 33.6 per cent of the migrants who have raised their expense for the migration from their own pocket or from the immediate family, about 16.1 per cent of the people have taken loan to finance their expenses and there is 24.1 per cent of the migrants who had to borrow money

from the different sources, while 23.4 per cent of the migrants had sell gold and for a few per cent of 2.9 had to even sell their landed properties to finance their migration expenses.

Table 3: Sources of finance for the migration expenses

Sources	Migration status			Total	Count
	Currently in Gulf	On leave	Returnee		
Loan	10.9%	3.6%	1.5%	16.1%	22
Self finance	22.6%	8.0%	2.9%	33.6%	46
Borrowings from source	18.2%	5.1%	0.7%	24.1%	33
Selling gold	18.2%	3.6%	1.5%	23.4%	32
Selling landed property	2.2%	0.7%	0.0%	2.9%	4
Total	72.3%	21.2%	6.6%	100.0%	137

Source: field survey, 2013

“The situation of the people in the village was miserable, people have lived in extreme poverty and hunger. Even when families that have about ten members to work in the fields, they were not given proper wages and the households didn’t have food to eat three times in the village. Now situation has changed, you will not get a single household who don’t have food to eat here in the village, to reach this situation migration of youth from the village to gulf have contributed substantially has no option other than going somewhere else to find a way out to live and that reached them into Gulf countries.” 29

(An elder from the village)

In short it does not give a very good picture regarding the finance for the migration expenses. Only a 33.6 per cent of the migrants were able to finance their expenses themselves and rest of the migrants had to depend on other sources like taking a loan from near by banks for interest, borrowing from the friends, relative or others, selling gold ornament of the female members, mostly of mother or wife, and even selling the landed property that one has. It reflects the stark reality that migrants even take big risks to finance their expenses for the migration. Since the migrants do not have anything substantial to finance them, they depend whatever is possible for them to depend even selling the land that one has. Migrants hope that they will have a better life as they migrate, a better job, better pay and then they can recover or repay what ever they spent for the migration and related expenses. That strong hope has led the migrant to take big financial risks to finance their expense. Poverty has directly and indirectly caused for the migration of Muslims to Gulf countries from this part of state of Kerala at one side. On the background poverty has decreased tremendously from the village and Gulf money has to be counted as one of the important reason among the many reasons why poverty has marked a very huge decline in the post Gulf migration era. So it has to be argued that poverty was also one reason why people have migrated from the village. As far as unemployment is concerned, unemployment has been a reason for the 33.6 per cent of the migrants to grab a visa of any kind and migrate to gulf countries, however the percentage of migrants who were unemployed or not engaged in any jobs which will enable them to gain anything as wage during the time of their emigration was 38 per cent. So the lack of availability of employment at home during the migration has been a strong reason why people migrated from the village to Gulf countries. So it will have to argue that poverty and unemployment among the Muslims of the village was one of the core reasons why people migrated to Gulf countries, especially to Saudi Arabia. A country into which the migration was easier, cheaper and convenient.

This has to be seen as core when one talk about the reason of migration from the village to gulf countries.

Dowry and expensive marriages

Dowry is payment of cash or kind that is given to bridegroom's family along with the bride during the marriage. Dowry is not only cash but it can be jewelry, landed property, vehicles, electrical equipment or any other household item. Dowry was rampant among the Muslims until very recently in the state of Kerala though it's in a decreasing trend now in the village. Marriage of daughter, sister or any other women in the family, its related dowry and costs of the marriage have been one of the reason why a section of people migrated and stayed for a long time in the destination country, especially for the people who had more number of girls or sisters. It was a practice that the groom's family has to hugely pay for the bride as dowry in cash during the Nikhas (the agreement by the grooms dad and bride). Dowry was also given in the form of other materials such as vehicles and landed property. Apart from the dowry the expenses for the gold which has to be given with the groom during the day of marriage are very huge expenses when it comes to buying gold 12. 4 per cent of the emigrants spent their remittances considerably for the payment of dowry and marriage expenses. People from the village also went to Gulf because of over expenditure for marriage expenses including dowry most of the first generation migrants had this in their mind that they have to either marry off their sisters or daughter and they would have to construct a good home out of their migration.

“If there is girl child, parents are worried that she will have to be married off with a huge dowry and its will very expensive. They will have to find money for that anyhow for gold, people who are migrated to Gulf who have many number of sisters to marry off, their life has been so difficult where they have to find finance for their sisters to marry off, even after many years after the marriages they have to stay at Gulf to pay off debts that family is in because of the dowry and other expenses. There are many parents after marrying off their daughters they cannot come back because of the debt and they are staying for year andyears”.

(Migrant from the village)

Its again the matter of money that is needed for the marriage of girl or the daughter including dowry, gold and for the other expenses, that has to be made anyhow, a huge percentage of the remittances goes for paying dowry, marriage expenses and even paying off the debts which were made because of the expensive marriages. It has to be argued here that, dowry and expensive marriages among the Muslims of the region and the village has been of the crucial reason for why a section of youth has migrated to the gulf countries and for another section why they are not able to stop their working life in the gulf countries even when they are old or even not physically well.

The case of Ossan caste

The "Ossan" is the Malayalam name of the Muslim community that is engaged in the occupation of barbers or hairdressing and women among them use to carry out the duties of the local midwives. Village do have significant population of this particular caste, they also migrated to gulf as other Muslims in the village and there is a different reason why people of this caste started to migrated apart from all the other reasons. The profession of Ossans were looked down upon, they were known as Ossans (Otthan) until late eighties and later when it was started to known as Barber or beautician the whole concept has changed, it's that the industrialization or modernization in that sector. At certain point there was huge demand for those who are trained as hair dresser and beautician in Gulf countries, they were in demand not only for the citizens of the Gulf countries but also to cater the needs of emigrants from India and else were constituted their customers over there. This led into the migration of Ossan people, and they started to get good jobs, that has also led into other people who are not even born in this particular caste to get trained in the occupation and migrate to gulf hoping that, they will get a good job over there.

"Hair dressing was a looked down upon occupation until the late seventies not only in the village but in the entire region, we were called as "Ossan" which denotes the lower position. We lived out of what we get as the wages and the gifts for our

work from the respective locations we go for the work. Suddenly at some point there was increased demand for the people who are trained in our occupation especially into Gulf countries, this demand was not only arrived from the need of the citizens of the respective countries but also from the requirements of the other migrant workers in the gulf countries. As the result of this people started to migrate, people who are not even in our caste having also started to get trained in the work and started to migrate, many have migrated at during this time ”.

(An Ossam migrant from the village)

So, as far the migrants from this particular caste is concerned the increased demand for their particular occupation and its acceptance at the Gulf countries and modernization of the Ossan caste's profession have been a reason why there was a substantial migration from their families apart from the other general reasons that are been given for Muslims in general.

The Gulf dream of youth

In the early 1970's the dream of an average youth from the Malabar or state of Kerala was to go do “Dubai” Dubai was not a country rather a dream of a better life which is free from the difficulties, poverty and sufferings from the village to a prosperous life. It was a hope for the people here who were struggling and for those who didn't have much things to live their lives.

"There was no other way out, the situation was such that no one can even live here" and that is the time people, especially youth getting such opportunity to dream about a world. That was Gulf

and that was the lot!. As far as people in the village are concerned, in the midst of poverty, misery and unemployment they started peruse their Gulf dream, their journey from sufferings to hoping that they will have a prosperous life. Gulf was indeed a dream, the dream of nice perfumes, of good and big concrete houses, of vehicles and better lives, it was dream for the poor who have nothing to live here in their villages during those times. After they got visa and migrated to gulf we all could understand that it's not the dream that we saw from the villages, the reality is different here and there after it's the story of struggles to meet the two ends. What left after the expenses at the Gulf has to be sent at homes every month, otherwise things will be in great difficulty as they are fully depended on us, then it's about living the full life of an individual without any substantial savings and only to meet the daily expenses of the family, if the migrant don't have any debt he is lucky then. This is the life an average men who is living in Gulf countries from Malabar” 32 . “

(A migrant from the village)

This is about aspirations and desires to get out from the everyday struggles of life and that Gulf dream is about and that is why people sell whatever they have at home like gold, or take loan and borrow money from wherever its available and migrate to Gulf countries. It's also aspirations of getting children educated, having a home of their own or may be getting daughters and sisters married off, or buy a piece of land these are the aspirations and dreams that an emigrant have here in the village which made them to migrate in to Gulf countries and still are the reasons why people migrate or why a huge work force of the village is not able to come back. This has to be seen as entirely different from what is known as “American dream” someone to see anAmerican dream he or she has to be rich enough but the Gulf dream is about getting out of something at home and soon coming back with what they have at home to have a better life back, not to settle or to be a permanent resident of

that country to which people migrate.

Family, regional and community net works Family,

regional and community networks have also been reasons for people to migrate to the Gulf countries from the village. If one is born to an emigrant family, his probability for doing any work in India is very less and there will be some job that was found and reserved for him. If there is an emigrant to any gulf country in the family to Gulf the possibility for the other members to migrate is also high and that is the meaning of how family act as a network for the migration. There is a section of migrants who works as drivers, house drivers, drivers in water carriers vehicles etc.. in some locations with in the village there are many people who work in same city of Saudi Arabia like Jedha and Riyad where huge section of villagers stay. It happen when someone migrate and he gets visa for the people in his locality or neighborhood a network of the locality or the village get created and that is a collection of migrants from the same village or neighborhood created. In these cases most of the emigrants are also engaged in same occupation. These all are connected networks and one who migrated to the Kingdom and stay for some time arrange visa for the rest of the people to migrate. this network is strongly connected in two manners one is through family relations and another is neighborhood and locality or neighborhood relations.

Culture of migration

The culture of migration is an academic discourse in itself, as what Jeffrey H. Cohen talked about, the migration or the movement and frames migration as one of the many strategies moves of how a community survives (Chohen 2004) Mappials have migrated and their migrations have marked in the history, they had migrated to Sri lanka, Malasia, Pakistan and Singapore etc as outside the India as well as to cities of Mumbai, Madrass and Kolkatta. However it's never been like a culture in itself that they have been migrating always, there has been reasons behind the each and every migrations that Mappila Muslims were part of, so that they cannot be just called as migrating community as such. People from the village have migrated to cities like Mumbai and Madrass in the post-independence period, these all are a kind of forced migration and whenever there was no other option other than migrating to somewhere else, they have tried to get out from here and find their lot. This is reality behind the culture of migration here in the village as far as the culture of migration is concerned. As I have discussed above, these have to be considered as some particular causes or factors that influenced or worked as push factors among the Muslim migrants in the village for the

migration to the gulf countries. It has to be argued that, the larger causes or the reasons those were explained and given to us in the literature and studies about the causes of migration to gulf countries is not sufficient to understand the migration of Muslims from the state. Considering the larger contexts and socio economic and political situations that have existed during the period of migration is also very important.

Conclusion

Inquiring from the larger learning that the literature that studied about migration from the state of Kerala to Gulf countries and the socio-economic and political situation that was existed in during 1970's and 1980's and the conditions of Muslims in Malabar in the wake of these periods, especially poverty and unemployment has to be seen one of the very crucial reason for why people had to migrate anyhow to gulf countries, especially to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Youth have migrated from Malabar to even selling the gold that their mothers or wives have, selling whatever small ladened property they have, borrowing from available sources and even taking loans. They were never educated or skilled to get higher paid professional employments in the destination countries and they had to satisfy on the unskilled, semiskilled lower paid jobs. Presenting a comprehensive socio- economic and migration details of the migrants from the village, this chapter shows that for the migrants from the village poverty, rampant unemployment throughout the last three decades, Umra and free visa facility to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, dowry and expensive marriages existed in the village, the modernization of the occupation of Ossan castes and demand for the hairdressers, the extreme aspirations and the dream of gulf from the suffering life at the village, family, village and other networks were the crucial reasons which made their migration to gulf countries rather than many other explanations given to us. It's evident that, there is nothing much religious about the why Muslims migrate from here to Gulf countries, but the economic reasons behind those comes out when we go for a deep analysis of the socio-economic and other conditions of the migrants.

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