

MIGRATION OF MAPPILA MUSLIMS TO THE PERSIAN GULF: ECONOMIC BEHAVIOUR AND RURAL CHANGE IN KERALA, SOUTH INDIA^{1*}

Introduction

The present study is conducted in the context of large scale labour migration from Kerala to the Persian Gulf region² since 1970s. The major concern of the study rests on the transformative role of emigration by analysing the "economic remittances"³ and "social remittances"⁴. In the backdrop of this conceptual foundation of migration, this study tries to examine the impact of labour migration of Mappila Muslims⁵ to the Persian Gulf countries on their home society of Malabar⁶, Kerala, South India. This paper contributes a synoptic view concerned with the interactions of international migration- remittance and social changes in the sending societies. The study shed lights that what are the determine factors to shape the rural economic structure of Malabar due to the migration to the Persian Gulf. The findings suggest that the historical structure of the sending place of Malabar and the structural factors of the receiving

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² Although there are eight littoral countries (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Sultanate of Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Iraq and Iran) in the Gulf region, the study focus on the six oil producing Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Sultanate of Oman, Qatar and United Arab Emirates). These Gulf countries are the principal destination of emigrants from Kerala (Kerala Migration Survey 2003). In the same way, on the basis of field work a sizable number of Mappila Muslim from the study area have migrated to the Gulf for their livelihood.

³ The concept of Economic remittance here means the transfer of money and goods. Remittance is a transaction (purchase and sale) of convertible currencies or capital subject to the exchange regulations of the countries. In a narrow sense or normally conceived wisdom in migration, it is sending money to the home country while working in a foreign country. Generally there are two types of remittances - one is outward remittance and the other one is inward remittance. The process of the outward remittance is terms of remittance from the sending country or where the wage earner is located and the inward remittance refers to the receiving country, where the beneficiary is located. For more details, see Koser 2007.

⁴ Peggy Levitt in her studies defines the concept of 'Social Remittances' as the flow of ideas, behaviours, identities, and social capital from host to home communities through the phenomenon of migration. These ideas play a decisive role in promoting immigrant entrepreneurship, community and family formation, and political integration. It is argued that migration occurs not only for sending remittances but also for returning with newly acquired skills and valuable knowledge to their country of origin. For more details, see, Levitt 1998; 2001.

⁵ Although the term *Mappila* is cited in different forms in different sources of literature as 'Mappila', 'Mappilla', and 'Moplah', this study has referred 'Mappila' throughout the chapters. It is observed that there were regional and local variations among the Mappila Muslims and they were divided on both vertical and horizontal lines. Vertically they were divided into *Tangals* (Muslims of Arab origin) and *Malabaris* (Native Muslims). The *Thangals* have been a highly respected segment of the society and were honoured. Horizontally the *Malabaris* were divided into *tarawadu* (elite) Mappilas, *non-tarawadu* Mappilas, *Puslans*, *Ossan* (barbers) and *vellam kories* (suppliers of water to the mosques) (Kunju 1989: 177). They are also found in Lakshadweep Islands off the coast of Malabar. Despite divisions within the community, nowadays the term *Mappila Muslim* is applied to the entire section of the Muslims of Kerala.

⁶ Geographically Malabar is known as the northern part of the State of Kerala. Malabar was a district under the erstwhile Presidency of Madras and so directly governed by the British. Today Malabar is not a political or administrative unit, but the term is still kept it as a "memory, a cultural presence" (Narayanan, M.G.S 1993: i).

place of the Gulf region plays a significant role behind the 'economic behaviour'⁷ and gradual change in the rural economy of Malabar. The emergence of 'new rich' and the 'built economy' relatively in the form of rural trade are observed the major transformation in the socio-economic sphere of Malabar. Furthermore, it highlights that the Gulf migration led to the distorted development in society by breaking down of the traditional economy of Malabar and reinforcing remittance dependant development strategies. The study interrogates, therefore, the general understanding of migration, which mainly projects the spatial mobility of manpower and a way of material well-being. In contrast to these common notions about migration and its impact, the present study argues that the investment pattern of the Mappila Muslims have to be discussed within the broader perspective of the socio-economic life of the people.

Data Collection

For the purpose of this study the data were collected through the field work survey from the major Gulf migrant's areas of Malabar. This study was undertaken at *Nadapuram* village, situated in the Calicut district, the erstwhile Malabar district of Madras Presidency of British India. Apart from this specific study area, field work was conducted in *Madayi* (Kannur District) and *Purathur* (Malappuram District) villages and other Gulf Pockets⁸ of the Malabar region. The major source of income for the people of these three villages is Gulf money. The percentages of people who are economically engaged in agriculture and service sector are relatively low. Three villages are selected, because the significant share of their total population belongs to Mappila Muslims. The proposed localities are also the major Gulf pockets in Malabar, from where a sizable number of Mappila Muslims residents have migrated for their livelihood. The study area has a long tradition of internal and international migration of Mappila Muslims, both legally and illegally. In terms of such tradition of migration from the aforesaid areas may generally differ from other regions of the state of Kerala except a few.

The primary data was collected from a sample population of Nadapuram village with the help of Interview Schedule and Observation Techniques. The study covered the entire village, and its wards

7. The concept of economic behaviour is rendered from the various works, namely Bourdieu (1963; 1984; 1993; DiMaggi 1991; Zelizer 1989; Parry and Bloch 1996). To these scholars, the economy is very broad and cuts across the conventional boundaries and tries to link with the cultural, social, political and economic life of the people. In fact, this concept moves beyond the traditional utilitarian logic of the rational choice of the individuals. In a broader sense, the socio-cultural foundation of the society comes under the economic behaviour. In this context, the social and cultural structure of the society marks the quality of economic activities of the individuals. In such a society, individuals are social being as first, because these meanings emerge in social interaction. Hence economic activities are expressive and symbolic beyond the utilitarian concept. This behaviour does not mean static, it may be observed differently in different contexts. According to Bourdieu, the economic action as part of an attempt to account for the practices of men and women. They found themselves thrown in to strange and foreign economic cosmos imported and imposed by colonialism with cultural equipment and dispositions. In brief, he focuss more on the socio-cultural dimension into the analysis of economy. In the current study, the term 'economic behaviour' denotes the consumption and spending pattern of the migrants. It try to answer the question that why the Gulf migrants spend a good volume of remittance to their consumption.

⁸ The Gulf pocket denotes a locality where a large number of people migrated to the Gulf region

through these sample households. Apart from the interview schedule technique, discussion with various scholars who have already studied Gulf migration helped to understand the dynamics of the issue. Informal discussions with local leaders, village level age-old persons and 'Gulf Wives'⁹ were also carried out to understand the changing scenario in the community over the years.

Key Debates on Persian Gulf Migration

Migration to the Gulf region has transformed to a major subject of debate in the academic circles since the 1970s oil boom. The emergence of oil-related economy and the subsequent labour migration to the Gulf began to attract a massive scale of immigrant workers from different categories from the different parts of the world (Addleton 1992; Al-Ali 2002; Amjad 1989; Gardner 2004; Chouri 1986; Seccombe 1986; Shah 2004; Birks and Sinclair 1979).

Some key factors were responsible in converting the Gulf States into a pivotal land for expatriate labourers from different parts of the world. The introduction of large scale industrialisation programmes in the Gulf countries necessitated a good number of labours for the initial stages of construction work and diversification of various sectors by utilizing oil revenue. The available data shows that the size of the national population and its participation in the labour forces were extremely small in the Gulf. Participation in terms of the skill and quality formation of the native labour forces was also not different in the region (Joseph 2002; Madavan 1985; Zacharia and Rajan 2007; Weiner 1982; Sinclair and Briks 1979).

As Weiner (1982: 3-4) remarks, neither the local educational system nor the system of economic incentives has been adequate to produce a local skilled labour supply large enough to meet expanding demand. Therefore, the development programmes pursued by the Gulf States are producing a social order divided between a consumer-oriented native population and productivity-oriented migrant population. In the backdrop of this social orientation the Gulf countries were more dependent upon the both the skilled and unskilled contract labourers for meeting their labour shortage.

The lion's share of the expatriate labourers was attracted from India (Weiner 1982; Madavan 1985). It is observed that the geographical proximity, the maritime trade relations with the Gulf region and the widespread unemployment in India, all these factors reinforced and operated as a push factor for migrants from India to the Gulf region. At the same time India was ready to supply any number of

⁹ The term "Gulf Wives", means a condition characterised by the absence or long separation of the household head or husband from their wives during their working period in the Gulf. Generally male migrants leave them in their own house or relative's house. Such cases are very much prevalent in the major migrant area of Kerala. The Kerala migration survey of 2008 conducted by CDS concluded that there are 1.60 million Gulf wives in the state, living a separate life from their husbands. In such a context, loneliness is mentioned as the most pressing and serious problem of Gulf wives. Here, most of the females desire a kind of "protective male umbrella" (For more details see Gulati 1987; *Kerala Migration Survey 2008*; Basheer).

workers at lower rate of wages than the other states. Most of these expatriate labourers in the Gulf countries are working as construction workers, personal employees, businessmen, traders, domestic servants and so on (Weiner 1982: 8).

Interestingly, in the light of the available data, emigration from India to the Gulf region is by and large a Kerala phenomenon (Weiner 1982; various working papers of CDS). The studies have underlined that the state of Kerala has been contributing a large number of both skilled and unskilled workers to the Gulf States since the 1970s. It is pointed out that the Gulf migration, by the end of 1970s, had begun to show some pronounced impact on consumption, savings, poverty alleviation, landholding pattern, health, education and income distribution of Kerala (Zachariah 2002, 2008; Shekar 1997; Sasikumar 2001; Saith 1989; Prakash 1978, 1994, 1998; Kurian 1978; Kannan and Hari 2002; Joseph 1988).

Ample amount of empirical studies on the characteristics and implications of migration have been conducted in Kerala in the context of labour migration to the Gulf. Most of them focus particularly on the economic impact on villages, districts, and Kerala as a whole (Commerce Research Bureau 1978; Government of Kerala 1987; Prakash 1978; Radhakrishnan and Ibrahim 1981; Saith 1985, 1992; Issac 1993; Gopalakrishnan 2002; Zachariah et al. 1999). These studies broadly agree that there is significant improvement in the economic position of migrant households. In addition, they highlight that most of the remittances have been used for unproductive purposes and warn about the inherent dangers on the development of a sound productive base.

Some studies on Gulf migration have focused on the macro-economic aspects in terms of the state as a whole. The total remittance on the economy of the state has been estimated at different levels. Among the states and union territories in India, Kerala leads with the highest number of emigrants where most of the remittances come from the Gulf region (Rajan 2003). The number of emigrants was estimated in 1999 as 13.6 lakhs and by 2004 it increased to 18.47 lakhs (Zakariah and Rajan 2008). The estimation of annual remittances shows increase in contribution from 22 percentages to 28 percentage of the state domestic product. Time series estimation of remittances from abroad to the Kerala economy for the period from 1972 to 2000 examines the influence of remittances on income, consumption and saving (Kannan and Hari 2002).

While some studies focus on the household and regional form of impact, others draw on the boom of construction sector and the gradual withdrawal of the people from agricultural sector which was once the base of the economy (Nair 1989: 344). During the decade from 1975-1976 to 1986-1987, agricultural production in Kerala registered a dramatic decline with a negative growth of -0.60 percentages as compared to a growth rate of 3.20 percentages in fifteen years preceding this period (Oommen 1991).

While the agricultural and industrial sector stagnated in Kerala during the migration period, especially transport, trade, banking, and real estates, showed rapid growth rate in large scale migrant areas (Kannan 1990; Ganesh 2007). Kannan (1990 Cited in Kurian 2002: 70) argues that this had deleterious results since, unlike the normal pattern of growth; the expansion of the tertiary sector was unrelated to the developments in the primary and secondary sector. Ganesh observed that the issue of remittances in the context of *Tirurangadi*¹⁰, which have been responsible for the commercial prosperity of the region without corresponding increase of any of the agricultural and non-agricultural forms of production. Despite the growth of educational opportunities and healthcare facilities due to the Gulf migration, the substantial percentage of the human labour power in the region is unutilised or underutilised (Ganesh 2007: 109).

It is important to note that Mappila Muslims comprise the major proportion of the total number of migrants to the Persian Gulf (Weiner 1982; Kurian 2002; Shekar 1997). In fact, the intensity of Gulf migration from Kerala is high in the Malabar region where Mappila Muslims are the dominant community. For example, according to the census of 2001, Muslims constitute less than a quarter (24.7 percentage) of the total population in Kerala (Census of India 2001, Kerala), albeit their proportion is doubled among the emigrants. A study of CDS, Trivandrum, estimated that the total migrant population from Kerala in the Gulf was 18.48 lakh in 2007, of which 8.83 lakh was Mappila Muslims. In 2004 and 1999, the share of migrant population of Mappila Muslims was 43.7 and 41.9 percentage respectively.

Despite the monetary remittance is mainly used for purchasing gold ornaments, conducting marriage ceremonies, the construction of mansions and the purchase and maintenance of land (Kurian 2002; Nair 1989, 1983; Prakash 1978, 1998; Ganesh 2007), the Gulf money is also largely being invested in trade related firms. In the light of Gulf money, Ganesh noted, "economy is oriented entirely towards consumption and substantial group that survive by the growth of new luxury tastes among the people. Thus the "life world of the people" has shifted from production to consumerism, and it has resulted in a "make-believe world of artificial prosperity" (Ganesh 2007:57).

In the light of this review of literature that the present study interrogates the partial understanding of the migration by posing some important questions about the various issues of the Gulf migration. What are the characters of the rural economy due to the origin of Gulf money? How does the majority of the Mappila Muslims link with the trade and its related work? Is there any nexus between economic behaviour and the history of the migrant community of Mappila Muslims? Since these are few questions that remain unexplained in the existing literature, the present study would be pertinent in the sphere of migration studies.

¹⁰ One of the Gulf Pockets in Malappuram District of the Malabar region.

Gulf Remittances: 'Built Economy' of Trade and 'New Rich'

As a result of the Gulf migration, the erstwhile traditional economy in the densely migrant area of Malabar is replaced by chain of shops with foreign goods, new model of restaurants with Arabian food recipes, furniture shops and so on¹¹. The character of labour required and the pattern of production for the new economy is entirely different, which is one of the reasons to the emergence of a non-agricultural group who operates these new economic activities in Malabar. The new trend of the emergence of local trade and business can be considered as the reconstruction of the mercantile tradition of the Muslims. It is quite visible in the study area that a few of the people who have returned are setting up their own businesses in their home town. Some of the respondents and their family members and friends in the study area are still operating both small and big size of business in the Gulf.

Moreover, the petty rural based trade economic pattern of Mappila Muslims has been transformed in a big way in the light of Gulf remittances. In the study area, a good number of Gulf returnees have already started a number of Arabian model furniture shops, cafeterias, restaurants and large size Bakery shops¹². It can be said that the process of market oriented globalisation has been reinforced even the rural areas of Kerala due to the inflow of the Gulf remittances. The different types of foreign origin food items are easily available even in rural Gulf Pockets. It shows that Gulf migration has provided a space to stimulate the traditional petty trade. It is observed in the study area that a good number of migrants are operating cafeterias in the Gulf. Most of the migrants operate the same kind of cafeteria in their particular home place with the help of their relatives or friends¹³. Hence it is interestingly to say that this study area is known as the place of cafeterias. Gradually they emerged financially sound through the operation of cafeterias.

The shifting of local economy from the agricultural sector and other related rural occupations in the wake of inflow of remittances has also been observed in the study area. The changing nature of this economy has evolved through the migrant's desire for investment in their own home society in different ways. Some scholars have documented how transnational connections, specifically remittances, profoundly change the materials, designs and the use of space in the migrant's communities of origin (Smith 2006; Change 2006; Fletcher 1997). This form of built environment expresses the changing

¹¹ The influence of the Gulf migration is reflected to the naming of the shops in the study area. For instance, few names of the shops as Hi-ten gulf bazar, Take one gulf bazar, KM gulf bazar, Gulf palace, New gulf park, Arabian palace, World bazar, Gulf club, Gulf park, Maggalen gulf bazar and so on.

¹² The emergence of a chain of Arabian model restaurants is a new phenomenon in the Gulf pockets of Malabar. *MRA*, *MR* and *Al-Bake* are few of them operated by either Gulf migrants or Gulf returnees. Different kind of food like Sandwich, Tikka, Kebab and Cubase are served in these restaurants.

¹³ There is strong management skill behind the success of Cafeteria and its logic of profit making. There are eight hours working time per day in a Cafeteria. Here there is no manager and worker; all work for the total benefit of the firm. All the members contribute the share equally and share the profit and loss among the members, a kind of Co-operative society. This form of cafeteria reflects a kind of community unity among the Mappila Muslims. More details see (Poithumkadavu 2011).

character of social relations in specific area. Corner points out that built environment is an on-going medium of exchange. It is embedded and evolved within the imaginative and material practices of different societies at different times (Corner 1999: 5). Here, the emergence of built economy in the local area is connected with the flow of the Gulf remittances. It is observed that in the study area, Gulf money was incorporated with the built form of economy.

The emergence of the 'New Rich'¹⁴ as a social group with considerable increase in the number of persons of non-agricultural class can be considered as a visible outcome of the Gulf migration. Among this new social group, a small group of migrants from Malabar, who are predominantly based in the Gulf, run huge business and commercial networks in the urban or semi-urban centers of Malabar and the major cities of the Gulf (Osella & Osella 2009) and they are generally known as the "new rich". As Castles observed in his study that the way of labour migration often paves way for development of commercial activities with diverse international business. It wields a huge budget, providing hundreds and thousands of jobs not only in the Gulf but also worldwide. It is managed by a set of individuals, agencies and institutions each of which has an interest in promoting the business (Castles 2002: 1151). Even though most of the Mappila migrants do not run huge business and trade, few of them are very powerful both in the Gulf and Kerala. In general, these new business groups have already begun to mobilise the community and it has gradually led to a new community identity among the Muslims of Malabar as a whole. The strong presence of these groups has influenced the whole of the Mappila Muslim community of Kerala irrespective of class and their social background¹⁵.

Desire for Investment

Although there are limitations to get accurate information about the spending pattern of the Gulf migrants, attempt was made to collect some of the data regarding the same. Most of the migrants spent their money in either construction or renovation of houses. Others invested in small and big types of businesses in their native place. Some other sections of migrants expressed their desire to invest in businesses in the Gulf. However, as Gilani mentions, a difference is found between their actual and desired behaviour for investment in our study area. When they are asked how they would like to spend their savings, they gave a response contrary to their actual behaviour (Gilani 1968:148)

¹⁴ The term 'new rich', is from Pinches (1999). He used this term to understand the emergence and the economic growth of a new layer of people due to the experience of industrialisation up to the late 1990's in the Asian region. His argument is that the rise of new layer (New Rich) of people has left an imprint in the societies of Asian region. The author tries to understand the questions, such as who these people are, how they come into being and what place they occupy in their society and the Asian region, with reference to the socio-cultural terrain.

¹⁵ These new groups are owing to the huge investments they have made in terms of infrastructure development and urban restructuring in the cities of Malabar. They also work in economic partnership with the state government on major projects.

Table 1. Distribution of Migrants by their Desire for Investment

Desire for Investment	Number of migrants	Percentage
Business	78	39
Liquid Saving	47	23.5
Real Estate	37	18.5
Agriculture	15	7.5
Religious Ceremony	8	4
Charitable work	4	2
Others	11	5.5
Total	200	100

The Table 1. shows that majority of the migrants (39 percentage) preferred to invest in business. The migrants who wished to invest as liquid saving were around 24 percentage of the total of the sample. Another 18 percentage of the respondents liked to invest in real estate sector. This is one of the emerging sectors in the study area. Few among the migrants (7.5 percentage) wished to invest in agricultural sector. The representation of migrants investing in religious ceremonies and charitable work is very less.

Islam, the tradition of trade, Mappila Muslims and the Gulf Migration

The socio-economic structure of the Mappila Muslims of Malabar has to be examined within the historical context in which various local and global factors contributed to set the scene for migration of the Mappila Muslim community. The study on Mappila Muslims and their investment pattern on trade related firms would be meaningless and incomplete without analysing the various historical trajectories associated with the community. The contemporary scene of this community has been immensely influenced by these historical trajectories.

The history of Islam has been associated with global trade and commerce for centuries. Trade was always discussed in the Islamic context with reference made to Muslim merchants. So trade has been labelled as a "Muslim" activity because it was mainly conducted by Muslims of the West Asian region (Risso 1989:1). It is observed in history that the Islamic religious principles promoted such a positive and encouraging orientation of trade and commerce. Rodinson mentions that the density of commercial relations within the Muslim world constituted a sort of world market...of unprecedented dimensions. Islam spread not only westward to Europe but also eastwards right across to India, South-East Asia and China, as well as southwards into Africa through the process of either religious or commercial influence (Rodinson, 1974: 56).

Apart from the religious mutual relationship between the Islamic principles and trade, Arabs were forced to engage in maritime commerce further into the Indian Ocean. Ibrahim (1990) examines the Arabian topography and climatic conditions as a prominent possible factor that led to the promotion of trade and commerce. These geographical aspects of the Arabian soil prevent them from having agriculture as a source of income. The landed aristocracy depended upon the network of traders to extract revenue. The urban elites of southern Arabia too were depended more on commercial profits, than agrarian surplus. Thus, geographical and topographical features rather than religious predictions encouraged maritime commerce in Southern Arabia. The capitalist mercantilism within Islam proceeded to religious, political and economic forces in all walks of society (Ibrahim 1990). The Arabs were particularly dependent on trade with many parts of Asian and African coastal areas, such as North Africa, South East Asia, South Asia and so on. These markets probably constituted the most profitable branch of Islam's foreign trade. Between 650 AD and 1000 AD, the leading edge of global intensive power lay in the West Asian region (Hobson 2004: 39).

Global Trading Contact and the Settlement of Arab Diaspora

As pointed out, the transnational trading contact and its relationship with different regions in the world started centuries before. The Indian Ocean rim is an example of a trade contact that has carried a prominent role in transnational trade. (Walker 2008: 21). This maritime commercial tradition not only accompanies the wealth and resources in to the major port towns of the world, but it encouraged the exchange also. Here, the Arabs were the real global capitalist pioneers, serving to weave together a global economy of significant scale and importance (Rodinson 1974). This Arab trade connection had laid down the foundation stone for not only economic exchange but a cultural or material exchange between the people of the two regions. Here trade became a major factor behind the process of exchange. Philip D. Curtin observes that the settlement of trading Diaspora in different places influences the subsequent socio-cultural and economic life of the host community. "The commercial specialists would remove themselves physically from their community and go to live as aliens in another town, usually not a fringe town, but a town important in the life of the host community. ...The merchants who might have begun with a single settlement abroad tended to set up a whole series of trade settlements in alien towns. The net result was an interrelated of commercial communities forming a trade network or trade Diaspora" (Curtin 1998: 2).

Arab Trading Diaspora and the Emergence of Mappila Muslims in the Malabar Coast

The geographical location of Malabar and availability of natural resources were closely associated with the initial settlement of the Arab trading Diaspora and the subsequent emergence of Mappila Muslim community in the coastal belt of Malabar region. In brief, the trade contact not only carried goods, services and ideas, but also left a Diaspora in Malabar. This Diaspora came into being through trade with Arabs from distant places, who married women from the coastal area and established settlements. This implies that Muslim communities on the West Coast of India are the result of the union of Arab sailors and traders with native women. The genesis of Mappila Muslim community has to be sought in these unions, temporary or permanent (Freitag 2003: 54-55; D'Souza 1959: 487; Koya 1983). In addition, Muslims from outside settled in these areas and some of the native inhabitants began to embrace Islam (Nadvi 1934: 478).

Like any other trading hub of the world, different trading groups such as the Arabs, the Jews, the Persians, the Greeks and Romans presented themselves in the Malabar Coast in different periods of time. The spread of Islam in the initial stage at Malabar Coast is mainly connected with the commercial orientation of Islam. This is, of course, the historical reason for the bond of some sections of the Mappila Muslim community with trade and commerce. Therefore, trade and the link between foreigners and locals reinforced the formation and dynamics of the coastal society of Malabar in the initial stage of Arab settlement. This form of age old bind with the trade and its related work was the integral part of the socio-economic life of the Mappila Muslims.

Occupational Background of the Migrants

The occupational profile prior to emigration is another important element in understanding the trade related interest of Mappila Muslim community. The sample survey shows that the number of unemployed at the time of emigration was comparatively low. Table. 2 indicate that most of migrants (23.5 percentage) were engaged in small type business field. Here the small type business means a variety of jobs-petty shop runners, street hawkers, fish sellers, and business brokers and so on. The next major categories belong to drivers and shop keepers representing around 32 percentage of the total number of people surveyed at the time of their emigration. While the proportion of Salesmen comes around 14.5 percentage, Hotel cooks and Helpers share 8.5 percentage of the total sample of migrants studied.

The rest of the respondents represent various jobs prior to migration, namely Painters, Masons, Electricians, Farmers and Agricultural Labourers. The total representation comprised by these categories is around 15.5 percentage and each category represents below 8 percentage of the total

samples. It is found that 6 percentage of migrants were engaged in other types of activities prior to their migration. Most of them were teachers, engineers or doctors.

Table 2. Occupational Status of Migrants on the Eye of First emigration

Occupational Category	Number of Cases	Percentage
Mason	2	1.0
Electrician	4	2.0
Painter	10	5.0
Salesman	29	14.5
Driver	32	16.0
Shopkeeper	32	16.0
Farmer	1	.5
Agriculture Labourer	14	7.0
Hotel Cook and Helper	17	8.5
Small Type Business	47	23.5
Others	12	6.0
Total	200	100.0

As per the data provided in Table 2, people from all walks of life joined in the migration stream and most of them were belonged trade related work.

Sources of Income of the Migrant Family

In the present study, the socio-economic background of the migrants prior to migration, is examined in relation to the major sources of income of the migrant family. As it is stated earlier, the economic backgrounds of the migrant families were relatively backward. The Table 2 indicates that more than 40.5 percentage of the migrant families were dependent upon daily wages as their major source of income prior to Gulf migration. Around 18 percentage of the migrant families were found to have their earning from small type business, while 15 percentage of the migrant families sought agriculture as their financial source. Only 5 percentage of the migrant families belonged to the big size business group, while 8.5 percentage of the migrant families were dependent upon both agriculture and small type business. The rest of the migrant families in the sample survey represent both daily wages and small type business or business and agriculture.

Table 3: Distribution of Income sources of Migrants on the Eve of Migration

Sources	No. of Migrants	Percentage
Agriculture	30	15
Daily Wages	81	40.5
Small type Business	36	18
Business	13	6.5
Agriculture and Daily Wages	11	5.5
Agriculture and Small Type Business	17	8.5
Daily Wages and Small Type Business	1	0.5
Agriculture and Business	1	0.5
Others	10	5
Total	200	100

From the above data it is observed that the majority of the migrant families' source of earnings belongs to mainly daily wages, small type business and agriculture. It is very clear that traditionally a substantial number of Mappila Muslims engaged in trade, business, and a few of them as manual labourers and fishermen also (Thurston 1993; Logan 2000). These factors more or less reflected in the sample survey.

The majority of these migrants, who were lacked any formal industrial training and could not therefore be quickly absorbed into technical jobs. The only possibility for most of them was to find their way into the regional economies through the merchants and traders from Western India. They began to work for the Gujarati, Persian and Arab merchants who ran shops and supplied provisions, spices and textiles to the indigenous and the rapidly growing migrant population in the region (Joseph 2006). They also began to run shops, hotels and canteens in public establishments, while some others joined construction companies as unskilled labour and assistants to masons, plumbers, electricians and others. In due course of time, most of them began to own businesses.

The information gathered from the study area provided that many elderly persons had experienced internal migration, and had worked in the major cities of Indian States like Madras, Coimbatore, Bangalore, Vijayawada, Hyderabad, Ahmadbad and Mumbai, they mainly worked as helpers in Hotels, tea makers, tea shop operators, salesmen, Bakery workers and small traders. Besides these categories of workers, a few of them worked as manual labourers in the industrial sector. Some of

the migrants found their source of income in the petty trading of a wide variety of goods, such as coconut, betel and areca nut. The previous migration experience took place both internally and internationally promoted a historical engagement with trade and its related source of economy.

Occupational Status in the Gulf

The occupational characteristics of the Mappila Muslim migrants in the sample data (Table 4) reflects the nature of jobs, in which they were engaged in the Gulf countries. Here, the demand for labour was mainly in construction sector. In fact, the number of Mappila Migrants in the construction sector is relatively low. Most of the Mappila Muslims, historically, were mainly engaged in the small type of trade and business and agricultural related occupations prior to their emigration to the Gulf. Although the new generation of Mappila Muslim migrants has been engaged in some form of official work in the Gulf, a good number of the Mappila Muslim emigrants continue their business related work even in the Gulf region. If one examines the sample survey it is clear that a majority of the Mappila Muslim migrants were engaged in business and related occupations, such as shop keepers, Salesmen, Hotel cooks, Helpers and so on. Most of them simultaneously worked and managed Cafeterias, Fruit shops, Textile shops, Electronic shops, Supermarkets and Vegetable shops.

Table 4

Occupation	Number of migrants	Percentage
Mason	1	0.5
Electrician	5	2.5
Painter	8	4
Salesman	30	15
Driver	38	19
Shopkeeper	34	17
Housekeeper	7	3.5
Hotel Cook and Helper	30	15
Business	31	15.5
Others	16	8
Total	200	100

Here it is observed that there is a link between the work status of Mappila Muslim migrants in the Gulf countries and their socio-economic background prior to their first migration. As per the work status data given in the table, the majority of the emigrants work in business related sector in the Gulf and it is accounted to around 62 percentage of the total migrants. As given in the table, 30 percentage of the migrants works as driver in the Gulf. The representation of Masons, Electricians, Painters and House keepers are relatively less than 10 percentage of the sample. Although the newly emerged economy has increased requirement for information technology related professionals in the Gulf sector in recent past, the representation of Mappila Muslims is relatively high in the business related work force in the Gulf.

Social Meaning of Trade, Consumption and Rural Change

As it mentioned earlier, the features of trade related work among the Gulf migrants are observed with respect to the regional context of the Gulf and its religious idea of Islam. The Gulf region had a profound tradition of urbanism and merchant activities which were directly committed with consumerism. For many centuries, Islamic merchants from the Gulf had led the world trade. Although the majority of the population of the Gulf remained rural, market activity was a prominent and cherished part of their city life and its consumer process. Many people enjoyed the process of shopping, picking out new items. Furthermore the Gulf region offered a distinctive interplay between powerful ongoing spiritual values and the new lures of consumerism. Islam was by no means hostile to material display and it did not emphasise the holiness of material denial (Stearns 2001: 112). This tradition of consumerism might have directly or indirectly influenced the Gulf migrants and their families in Kerala.

Another explanation regarding the emergence of trade in Malabar is associated with characteristics of the host society. The socio-economic conditions of some host societies and the imitation tendency of immigrants mainly led to consumerism becoming a way of life. The host society's high resource-consumption patterns could be expected to be adopted more readily by immigrants. With respect to material things, immigration can bring the migrant into contact with new consumer items and patterns of thought and behaviour associated with them. The changing patterns in the volume of income, also led to corresponding changes in the consumption pattern. Any increase in income will enable the migrant to increase his or her consumption and participation in the new lifestyles. It can reinforce attachment to these new ways and cause the migrants to become more dependent upon continued adherence to them. This effect on consumption levels continue regardless of whether individual migrants remain in the host societies or return to their societies of origin (Day 1999: 503-525).

In brief, in the study area, a group of the migrant's families enjoy a higher standard of living than what they were having before migration. Gulf migration has brought a change in the life style and attitudes of their families. They are now able to imitate the life style of the upper strata of the society. Most of these goods are now locally available, and the higher purchasing power of migrant households enabled them to acquire these goods more frequently and effortlessly than non-migrants could. It is observed that the spending pattern of Mappila Muslim is also linked with the characteristics of Gulf markets. Most of the Mappila Muslim migrants belong to the lower strata of society, especially rural or coastal belt of Kerala. For them the Gulf region was a global space and they started to engage directly or indirectly, with the spending pattern and life style of the emerging global cities in the Gulf region. The unskilled and backward community of Mappila Muslims thus utilised the Gulf opportunity, and they started to spend their money for consumer needs when they returned to their home town. This form of consumption is viewed as a symbolic action among the migrant community. British sociologist Anthony Giddens has put forward the notion that consumerism is 'simultaneous cause and therapeutic response to the crisis of identities emanating from the pluralisation of communities' (Giddens 1991). According to Stearns, 'consumerism describes a society in which many people formulate their goals in life partly through acquiring goods that they clearly do not need for subsistence or for traditional display' (Stearns 2001: ix). Consumerism is no longer simply the acquisition of goods and services; it has increasingly become a fundamental way of communicating the mobility of people or a community.

Although there is a certain degree of limitation to associate the migrant with the host society of the Gulf, Mappila Muslims, to some extent, keep their adherence to the Arab society. It opens through the religious and cultural bondage with the Arabs. As the result of large scale migration to

the Gulf, Mappila Muslims started to overlook growing economy, gradual prosperity and the material reality of spending and consumption pattern of certain sections of the Arab society. It creates a world of imagination on one hand. Most of the Mappila Muslims in the Gulf countries work in unskilled sector, with low status and unsocial working hours. They experience alienation of all types in the work place and consequently, the Mappila Muslims try to get a kind of reorganisation in their home society. It reflects through the spending and high consumption pattern. Bikhu Parekh observed this social phenomenon as 'cultural rebirth' (Parekh 2008: 83).

As some studies note, the impact of remittances initially affects the households that receive them and then is quickly transmitted to the other sectors of the society (Prakash 1998; 1986). Edward J. Taylor, in his study on Mexican village economy points out that migrant remittance from the United States had profound direct and indirect effects on the village economy of Mexico (Taylor 1996: 102). The opportunity along with globalisation process also transformed the character of village economy in the study area. As Saskia notes, some metropolitan cities in the world including the Gulf cities are reaping the maximum economic gain through global movement of capital (Saskia 1998; 2006; 2001). It is gradually experienced by the Mappila Muslims through migration to the cities like Dubai, Sharjah and Jiddah in the Gulf. The ambiguous character of migrant communities and the ambivalence of their consciousness and identity is particularly evident when linked to global cities. The idea is that immigrants may find their primary sense of identity with the level of the city (Castles 2000).

Historically, the urban centres of the Gulf, especially Dubai were the trading centres of the world which is still continuing the same position. The government of UAE provides a very conducive atmosphere for entrepreneurial growth in different levels, such as better infrastructural facilities, low tax regimes, the provision of free trade zones, the right to 100 percent foreign ownership; the absence of taxes and import or export duties and the right to full repatriation of profit and capital (Patel 2003). A large number of small and big sizes of entrepreneurs from Kerala take full advantage of these facilities. The Mappila Muslim migrants built a new form of rural economy based on trade in their home place through this interaction with Gulf cities and the available entrepreneurial skills acquired from the Gulf.

It is noted that the significant growth of new rich, through the operation of both rural and urban trade, had upset the rural power-structure. The position and status enjoyed traditionally by a few landed and aristocratic families is now challenged by the status of 'new rich'. In fact, one can argue that Gulf migration has proved to be a great social equaliser. It has provided an opportunity for the economically unfortunate to enhance their economic position and through it, revise the socio-economic hierarchy.

Here, it is pointed out that the traditional social stratification between the landed class and the poor has now given way to a new social categorization in the form of Gulf emigrants and non-migrants (Shekar 1997: 139).

Here it is important to examine the social origin of the consumption and spending patterns of Mappila Muslims. This issue has to be linked with the symbolic power of the migrant community. The symbolic power needs to be generated to compensate the inferior position in terms of his unskilled job, low educational status and other form of socio-economic backwardness. To a migrant, his absence in their home society is considered as a limitation. This absence is fulfilled through his spending pattern and his contribution to the general interest of the society. His contribution to the religious institutions is manifested as his presence even if he is in the Gulf. It produces a complex economic culture among the Gulf migrants. One respondent said that the Gulf migrant projects his identity through the spending on carpeting the floor of Mosque, building new arch to the Mosque, sponsoring the Prophet Day festivals and so on. The important factor to be mentioned here is that most of the Gulf migrants did not bother for a total transformation of the society, because their social and economic condition was not enough to make such a transformation happen. But they could succeed to some extent in bringing socio-economic changes in their own community. It might have happened through the direct or indirect involvement of Gulf remittances in the society.

The noticeable factor is that migration has led to the construction of new social as well as economic identity. This fact needs to be evaluated in the context of Malabar, where a large chunk of the Gulf migrants belongs to the lower section of the society. Their economic behaviour is shaped by this socio-economic consciousness. The economic behaviour of high spending on consumer durables may be a response to this consciousness among the migrant communities. Here, the process of converting the Gulf remittance for consumer needs has to be understood within the larger social meanings of Mappila Muslims. Despite the emergence of this new 'culture of consumption' and the visible process of 'transformation' having already attracted the attention of scholars in this area, the character of transformation and its link with the economic behaviour has not been properly investigated in the existing literature on migration so far.

The large-scale migration from Kerala to the Gulf provides the unusual opportunity to witness the unfolding of social dynamics. There is an observation that economic remittance and its social ideas acquired from the host society are incorporated within the economic behaviour of the home society. As Levitt mentioned, it has been conceptualised by the term "social remittances" (Levitt 1998 and 2001). As the migration to the Gulf is of short term nature, the migrants may imbibe the socio-economic behaviour of both the place of origin and the place of destination, thereby assimilating the local socio-economic

ideas. This idea among the Mappila Muslims is more visible in the form of change in investment in trade related economic sectors in the urban and rural centers following the Gulf migration. Hence, the degree of interaction between two regions and its social dynamics is a major point of concern.

Conclusion

Like most of the studies on the economic impact of migration, the present study also reveals that the majority of the economic remittances of the migrants have been spent on consumer durables and other unproductive sectors. With respect to this character, the economic impact of migration is discussed in different ways in the study. The Gulf migrant area of Malabar has witnessed the emergence of small trading centres with foreign goods and tastes. In the study area, both Gulf migrants and the returnees have started some of the Arabian model furniture shops, cafeterias, restaurants and large size bakery shops. At the same time a small section of migrants were found to be extremely wealthy with public presence and recognition in the society and they are generally known as the 'new rich'.

This study has attempted to question the general argument that the Gulf remittances are largely spent for satisfying the consumer needs of migrants and it has fostered the 'culture of consumerism'. It was disclosed through the discussion of the dialectical relationship between the spending and the consumption pattern of Mappila Muslims and their socio-economic background prior to migration. The economic capital of the migrants was converted to the 'symbolic capital' and it can be considered that the Gulf money has a larger social meaning.

The emergence of the 'culture of consumption' and spending more on unproductive sectors has already invited the attention of scholars in the area of migration. But the meaning of spending pattern and the economic behaviour of the migrants has not been properly investigated so far in the context of Kerala. In brief, the study area is experiencing the new economic orientation which is interlinked with the consumer goods, construction boom and the rural trade induced by the Gulf remittance. However, it is clear that such a development is more linked with the economy that breeds more consumption and quest for migration. Many old persons very proudly narrated about the transformation of the villages from poverty to affluence due to the Gulf money. The increased consumerism provided much incentive for trade and led to an increase in the number of business establishments in the locality. However, the increase in demand for consumer items did not manifest itself in a corresponding expansion at the production levels in the region. Most of the goods are brought from outside and sold here. Besides weakening traditional village economies and increasing dependency, increased consumption by migrants and it produced an artificial and unstable source of revenue in the sending place.

The study, therefore, has gone some way towards enhancing the understanding that migration-induced changes are the combined effect of the complex relationship between economic remittances and social remittances. Both remittances have a relationship with the structure of the society. The current findings add to a growing body of literature on migration identify/recognise that any impact on the society, which is induced by either the factors of migration or non-migration are linked with the broader structure of the society.

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