

INFLUENCE OF GULF MIGRATION ON THE INSTITUTION OF FAMILY, AND SEQUENTIAL SINGLE PARENTING IN KERALA

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Abstract

Large-scale migration from Kerala to Gulf countries began in the early 1970s. The family is not an exception to how this has impacted practically every area of Kerala society. Women who were left behind when the male members migrate were overburdened and compelled to take up men's responsibilities. This study looks into how male migration affects the family that stays behind in various parts of Kerala, particularly the female members. The study focuses on the topic of single parenting, which has changed significantly as a result of migration to the Middle East.

Key words

Gulf migration, influence on family, single parenting

Introduction

The fundamental social unit around which society is constructed is the family. Families have a critical role in social development. In addition to teaching children civic virtues and a sense of social belongingness, Parents were primarily in charge of their education and socialisation. The family has always been viewed as a fundamental social institution and a component of human civilization. The likelihood of one or more family members migrating will have an impact on the family's internal role distribution and overall functioning. Family structure will be impacted by the temporary or permanent departure of family members.

Migration is a process in which the individual moves from area of origin to area of destination. Mainly the migration happened among the youngsters who leave their native place in search of profession or lively hood. Female Migration dominates if the migration happened from village to village. If the migration is from rural to urban area the male folk dominate. At times they keep their family in the native place itself. In such case we can see the problems of single parenting. A kind of role conflicts occurs among the single parents, which sometimes lead to very difficult situation. The situation creates stress and strain among the single parent.

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There are various reasons for single parenting for example widowhood, divorce, separation etc. But in this particular study the investigator focus on the aspects of migration and resulting single parenting.

Kerala comes to the first place or it has one of the highest rate of international migration in India. While the effects of migration on families have been the subject of numerous researches, little is known about how migration affects family structures and the problems Kerala culture has with single parenting. As far as concerned with Keralites gulf countries are considered to be the primary destination for migration, which is male driven also.

Scope of the study

The study's primary focus was on Kerala Gulf Migrant families. The main data gathered from respondents in the Thiruvananthapuram, Cochin, and Malabar regions served as the basis for the observations. The primary focus of the study is how gulf migration affects the institution of the family and leads to single parenting. Expected outcome of the study is a good understanding of impact of Migration on the institution family. Identification of Supportive mechanisms to the migrant family. Valuable suggestions for policy makers

Objectives

- To understand how migration affects institutional families.
- To analyze the impact of migration and the consequent rise in single parenting

Methodology

Migration is a prominent feature of Indian society. Most of the people go out side the country for better job and better earnings. This phenomenon is a recent trend in the middleclass and lower middle class families. Gulf migration is very popular in Indian migration. Due to the effect of Gulf migration socio economic structures of Kerala also undergo various changes. Due to the Gulf migration the family structure seems to have changed and male headed household is being shifted to female headed house hold. Married women faced lots of problems within the house hold. She was under the control of husband and in- laws. There was no freedom within the family and community. But through the gulf migration some changes were taking place in their families. Women began to take risk of house management and those functions earlier done by their husband. She was compelled to go outside the house and do some family matters. In such situation she had to face lots of problems from the in-laws and community. As a consequence she uses to have the socio-psychological problems and multiple role conflict.

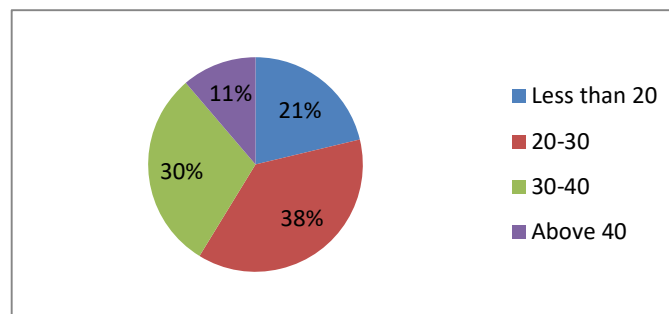
The survey, with small sample size of only 80 wives of Gulf migrants in Thiruvananthapuram, Cochin, and the Malabar region, served as the main basis for the study. Purposively, the respondents were chosen. Using the survey method, primary data were gathered from the wives of migrants. Direct, in-person interviews with respondents using a well-structured interview schedule. The identification of the samples was based on selective purposes like age of kids, length of migration period and income of the family. Social exchange theory, Family system theory, Stress buffering model are the theoretical frame work used in this study.

Analysis and Interpretation

The following becomes clear when the researcher inquires about the respondents' age distribution:

Table 1 Age distribution of the respondents

Age distribution	Number of respondents	Percentage
Less than 20	17	21.25%
20-30	30	37.5%
30-40	24	30%
Above 40	9	11.25%
Total	80	100%



Source: Field data

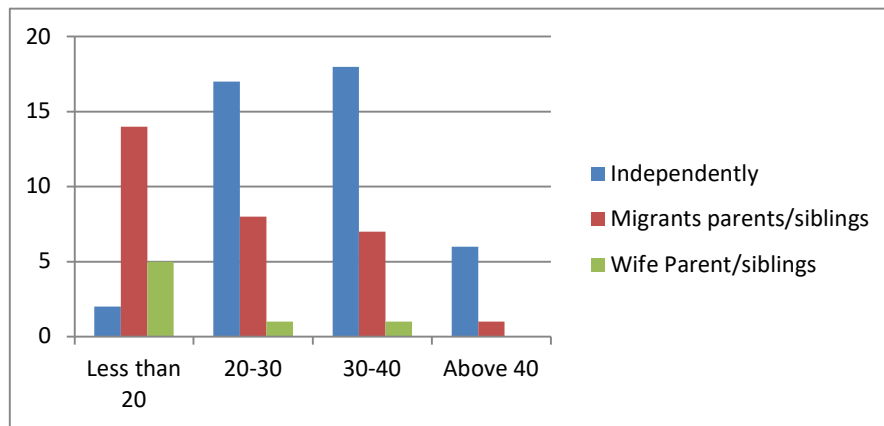
The aforementioned table indicates that the bulk of Gulf migrant spouses are in the 20–30 year age range, making up 37.5% of sample respondents in this age range and 21.25% of survey respondents in the 20–year age range. But the age group of 30 to 40 makes about 30% of the sample. There are fewer responders in the over-40 age group than in the other age groups. In a similar vein, the majority of Gulf migrant women had only received primary school when the researchers looked at issues of employment and education. Over 70% of them did not have a job.

Matters at home/Family concerns

The primary issue that results from male migration has to do with domestic life. The emigration of unmarried migrants who live with their parents and siblings won't require their family to relocate. When it came to married migrants, this issue became significant. As it happens, the most noticeable aspect of the shift that the remaining wives have to deal with has to do with where they now live, which has a big sociological impact on their duties as a whole in the family. The wives' post-husband migration residences are shown in the following table.

Table 2 Place of residence of wives after husband migration

Age group	Independently	Migrants parents/siblings	Wife Parent/siblings	Total
Less than 20	2	14	5	21
20-30	17	8	1	26
30-40	18	7	1	26
Above 40	6	1	0	7
Total	43(54%)	30(37%)	7(8%)	80(100%)



Source: Field data

According to the table, 37% of wives stayed with their parents-in-law, while 54% of wives wanted to be independent. This primarily applied to wives who had been living with their husbands' families and had done so even after their husbands had left. In addition, a number of spouses moved in with their in-laws due to safety concerns and the necessity for support, especially with child care. The preference of few women was to live with their own parents. Therefore, it can be generally concluded that male emigration enhanced family relationships in addition to resulting in lone parenting. There is little doubt that a wife's age has a major role in

where she lives while her husband is away. Retaining their freedom, the women who were older and more experienced made the decision to live alone. As a result, these women took over as the heads of their homes while their husbands were away. Thus, even if it didn't last long, male migration to the Middle East contributed to the rise of single parenting and homes headed by women. This is a very recent development with significant societal ramifications, especially in a Muslim community that is predominately patriarchal.

Family responsibilities

The unofficial guardian ship that migrants leave behind for their family, while they are away is a significant concern here. Even though the location of the family that was left behind will provide some insight into the guardian ship, it might not be reliable enough to indicate and determine who is ultimately responsible for the family's needs, even though many of the women were living on their own after their husbands migration.

. According to 55% of the respondents, in the event, the husband was not around the family, were the family's guardians once. They handled domestic matters mostly on their own. These were primarily the respondents who were self-sufficient. In most of the cases where wives resided with their parents (either their husband's or their own) the guardianship of the family was taken by the parents or even by their elder brothers. These arrangements were necessary because a male protector figure was needed, even though many women acknowledged that they made important decisions about themselves and their children.

Management of the household activities

These women were placed in a very different circumstance by their husbands' emigration. They had never interacted with the outside world before, but they suddenly had to accept significant responsibilities and make decisions. On the other hand, there was a widespread belief that women require the assistance of men to handle all elements of household work. An attempt is made there to understand the roles that women are left behind and the degree of their reliance on male relatives in this particular environment. For this reason, four key areas of household activities that are significant when it comes to male emigration were determined. They are the following

- 1 **Looking after Agriculture/Business** - Merely 3% of women work in the agricultural industry. When farming was the primary source of income for the family, the migrant's brother's father handled it most of the time (55 percent). Regarding commercial matters, a similar pattern is seen: very few migrants had modest businesses at the time of emigration. It is noteworthy

that the migrant's relatives, aside from parents and siblings, handled approximately 5% of the family business and agricultural operations.

2. **Managing family finances** – Regardless of the mode of remittance, managing finances is another crucial household task. Women who are exposed to enormous sums of money face new difficulties that they have never encountered. According to the survey, women are heavily involved in money management. It is clear from this that the respondents received the remittances from their migrant husbands even if they did not have complete control over the household. The wives' status and financial independence increased as a result of this duty, which also increased their influence over family decisions.
3. **Supervising house construction and purchase of land** – Building and buying land were two areas of activity where men assumed leadership roles. The majority of Gulf migrant households engage in this activity frequently, and it is evident that a sizable amount of remittances are used just for this reason. Although major decisions in this regard were made by the husbands during their home visits, the task of supervising the work was vested primarily with parents (52.5%). Despite these challenges, roughly 22.5% of respondents said they did a satisfactory job supervising the construction of the houses. It should be mentioned that they assumed this duty as no other members were available to assist them.
4. **Taking care of family health.** – It was noted that the immigrant family sought out the best medical care after becoming more prosperous economically and exposed to more people. The study revealed that the responsibility of medical care was mainly done by the wives (55%). In 25% of the family the parents /siblings took the health care of the family.

Psychological aspects

There is mounting evidence that the strains placed on women living in migrant households are getting harder and harder to handle. These women experience a great deal of stress and conflict. There are several types and levels of these stresses. Wives' and mothers' worries and anxiety begin as soon as the worker leaves the house. The newlywed brides endure maybe the harshest sufferings. A common occurrence is the migrant worker marrying during his month-long or two-week vacation and leaving his new bride in the hands of a relative. Living in an unusual, foreign, and frequently unfriendly environment with almost no one to communicate with is her problem. Prominent psychiatrists in the region are reportedly concerned about the rising prevalence of mental health issues. The state's "GULF POCKETS" have been discovered to have an unusually serious mental disease problem.

Women aged 15 to 25 are said to be the worst victims. The spectrum of psychological issues that Gulf wives face throughout various age groups is displayed in the table below. Some general psychological problems of gulf wives in different age groups are, Anxiety and depression, loneliness and isolation, Adjustment disorders, identity crisis, abandonment, Emotional distress, Role strain, and Self-esteem issues.

Table 3 Psychological Problem identified among the wives of gulf migrants

Age Group	Yes	No	Total
Below 20	16(20%)	2(2.5%)	18(22.5%)
20-30	20(25%)	8(10%)	28(35%)
30-40	13(16.25%)	12(15%)	25(31.25%)
Above 40	3(3.7%)	6(7.5%)	9(11.25%)
Total	52(65%)	28(35%)	80(100%)

Source: Field data

According to the table, younger wives experience higher rates of psychological issues than older wives. 20% of wives under the age of 20 experience psychological issues. In the 20–30 age range, it is 25%. Just 16.25% of people in the 30–40 age range. 3.7% of respondents who were older than 40 reported having psychological issues. The majority of the migrant wives experienced depression when their husbands were away, and their emotional lives were impacted by their single status. The majority of respondents reported having trouble sleeping. Long-term absences lead to loneliness and other issues.

Table 4 Frequency table showing communication of wife with husband

Communication timings	Number of respondents	Percentage
Daily	28	35
Every two days	30	37.5
Weekly	11	13.75
Monthly	9	11.25
Other	2	2.5
Total	80	100%

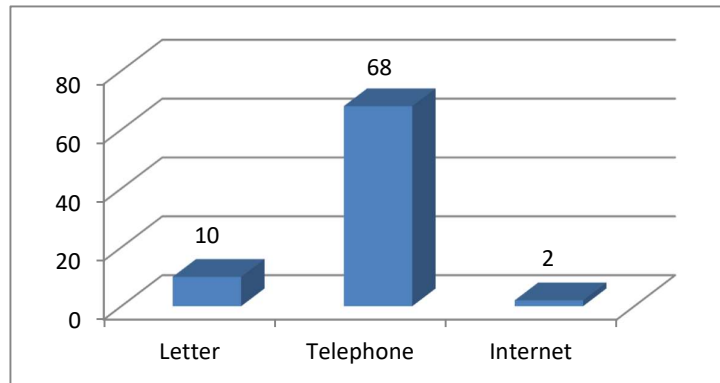
Source: Field data

According to the above table, around 37.5% of wives speak with their spouse every two days, compared to 35% of wives who do so every day. 13.75% of ladies talk to their spouses at least once a week. 11.25% of people speak once a month. Merely 1% of the participants reported having infrequent communication with their spouses. Regular communication helps reduce loneliness to a great amount. It also

greatly assisted the spouses in taking on more tasks, particularly those pertaining to money management, as they were able to communicate whenever needed.

Table 5 Medium of communication with husband

Medium	No of respondents	Percentage
Letter	10	12.5
Telephone	68	85
Internet	2	2.5
Total	80	100



Source: Field data

According to the above table, 85% of couples communicated with their husbands via the phone, while 12.5% did it via letter. 2.5% of respondents said they used the internet to talk to their husbands.

Table 6 Attitude of women towards the return of their husbands

Attitude	No of respondents	Percentage
Agree	53	66.25
Disagree	27	33.75
Total	80	100

Source: Field data

According to the table, 33.75% of gulf wives are not interested in their husbands quitting their jobs and returning home due to financial necessity, while 66.25% of gulf migrant wives respond that they truly wish their husbands were back home.

Conclusion

According to the report, men's relocation to gulf countries has improved their families' economic standing. The migration of people from West Asia has had a remarkable impact on schooling. The gulf migration altered their expectations for their children's schooling. The majority of immigrant families hope that their children will have greater opportunities than they did when they first moved to the Gulf. The absence of the father appeared to have a detrimental effect on the children's social attitudes and overall behavior. Migration led to economic independence, which improved living conditions and provided access to healthcare for families. Migration has enhanced the families' social and economic standing.

According to the report, women are now increasingly self-reliant as a result of male migration. They improved their overall standing and effectively oversaw the household's operations. They also had a strong eye for handling financial matters, and it's evident that women's psychological issues were exacerbated by their single-parent status. Regular conversation significantly reduced the issue of loneliness. The Gulf spouses found it very easy to take on the additional responsibilities of managing their finances and raising their children when they could communicate as needed.

Findings

- When compare religion wise, it is found that more restrictions suffered by single parents in the Muslim Community
- The traditional values and norms prevailing in the extended family played a supportive role.
- The society is still unaware of the issues and problems faced by the gulf wives
- Majority of the house wives have only primary education.
- As they do not have education they prefer giving importance to their children's education.
- Most of the single parents have become more self-reliant and capable of under taking responsibilities after their husband left for gulf.
- The single parents are found to be seen much complacent when they are in nuclear families than joint families
- Most of the single parents face much sufferings from their in-laws and communities
- Single Parents were interested in their children's education.
- The children of the gulf migrants were seen backward in their studies
- -The single parent wives face much pressure in moulding their children'
- Most of the single parent wives were able to do all the financial matters
- Majority of the single parent wives were concerned about their future and had lots of investment plans

- The wives of those emigrants ,who have been working abroad for several years ,were found to hold many responsibilities than those of the husbands who away from two to three years
- Among the single parent (gulf wives) those who were educated found to be more courageous
- All single parents (gulf wives) face lots of psychological issues.
- Those single parent (gulf wives) who live within the joint family ,do not have any chance to pick up their responsibilities
- Long gap in the arrival of the husbands leads to many social and psychological problems for the gulf wives

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