

Impact of Gulf Emigration on the Economy of Muslims: A Micro-Level Study from Falta Community Development Block, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal

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Abstract

Migration to the Gulf from India, a significant socioeconomic phenomenon, has profound micro and macro effects. India, the largest recipient of remittances from the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) nations, has seen a substantial outflow of employees, including semi-skilled and unskilled workers, from various Indian states. Before 2010, the migration to the Gulf from India was dominated by several South Indian States. However, the trend has shifted in recent years, with most workers migrating to the Gulf nations coming from densely populated northern and eastern India (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and Rajasthan). Muslims, who constitute a significant portion of the unskilled workers from India, are particularly affected. As per the Sachar Committee Report, Muslims are the disadvantaged group in India, especially in West Bengal. This study, conducted at a micro level, examines the economic effects of the Muslim labourers from the Falta CD block leaving for the Gulf in the South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. The study's primary data were gathered via semi-structured questionnaires from sampled houses. Socioeconomic data for both migrant and non-migrant families is collected. All the information is transformed into percentages and shown using various cartograms. The study found that the migration of Muslim workers from the Gulf had a substantial impact on their families and the society in which they resided. The study also revealed that Muslim migrant worker families in the Gulf were more prosperous and affluent than non-migrant worker households.

Keywords: emigration, Gulf nations, Muslim emigrant, economic betterment, West Bengal

Introduction

Migration refers to the permanent, semi-permanent or temporary change of residence of an individual or a group of people from one place to another. The history of migration

has come a long way since the very beginning of civilisation. There are many reasons behind migration, and the impact of migration is deep in society. Migration is classified into

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different categories. Based on the direction of movement, it is divided into two groups: out-migration or emigration and in-migration or immigration. When an individual or a group of people moves into another country after leaving their own country, it is considered emigration. The process of emigration is motivated by a variety of factors.

However, in most cases, economic reasons are what matter. Several reasons, including strong working conditions, rising standards of labour, and a stable social and economic environment, influence emigration. The primary source of emigrants into industrialised countries is from several underdeveloped and emerging countries, which are dealing with issues like the growing or explosion of the population (Sen 2008, pp-187-188). Countries like India, Mexico, China, Russia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines, etc., are experiencing the emigration process significantly, per the world migrant stocks data published by UNDESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs) in 2019. The people from different African countries have also permanently migrated to several European developed nations.

The causes of international migration are not concentrated on single factors. However, the causes of Gulf migration tend to focus only on single economic factors. Labour migration within the Arab region is not a new phenomenon. It started in late 1930 (Winckler, 2010, p-9). Gulf

emigration from India has a long history going back centuries to the time of Arab traders and travellers. There are several phases of Gulf migration, influenced by changes in economic conditions and immigration policies in the host countries (Chanda and Gupta 2018, p-180). The persistence of wage inequalities and low growth in formal employment encourage workers to consider international migration to improve their economic well-being (Madhu and Uma 2014, p- 94). India constitutes the largest contingent among expatriate workers of all labour-exporting countries to the GCC countries (Azhar, 2016, p-103-104).

Gulf countries are the leading destination for the emigration of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled labourers from various underdeveloped and developing countries. Almost all Gulf countries are enriched with petroleum. These countries are less crowded and have lower population densities. The per capita income of these nations is much higher than that of other developing countries. These countries are Muslim-dominated. The standard of living of the people of these countries is very classy. As the people of the Gulf nations are not involved in hard work, they always need various categories of quality workers and spend a sizable amount of money on them. The majority of the migrants in the GCC are estimated to be Muslims. Gulf countries prefer Muslim workers in most cases. The PEW research revealed that as per the Global

Religion and Migration Database 2010, about 10590000 Muslim migrant workers were present in the GCC countries, which accounted for more than 70% of total migrants (Faith on the Move- The Religious Affiliation of International Migrants, 2012).

Emigration from India to the GCC countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) is not new. It has a long history, though it has increased remarkably since the 1970s due to the Oil Boom (Kumar, 2013). So, migrating Indian workers on a larger scale is a phenomenon of the post-1973 oil era. They have migrated to those countries for employment and earning by participating in the construction and development of the economy of oil-exporting GCC countries (Azhar 2016, p-100). As per the various annual reports of the Ministry of External Affairs (MOEA), many people from India go abroad yearly for overseas employment. The

majority of these workers have gone to the Gulf countries. These workers are primarily semi-skilled and unskilled; most are temporary migrants who return to India after the expiry of their contractual employment.

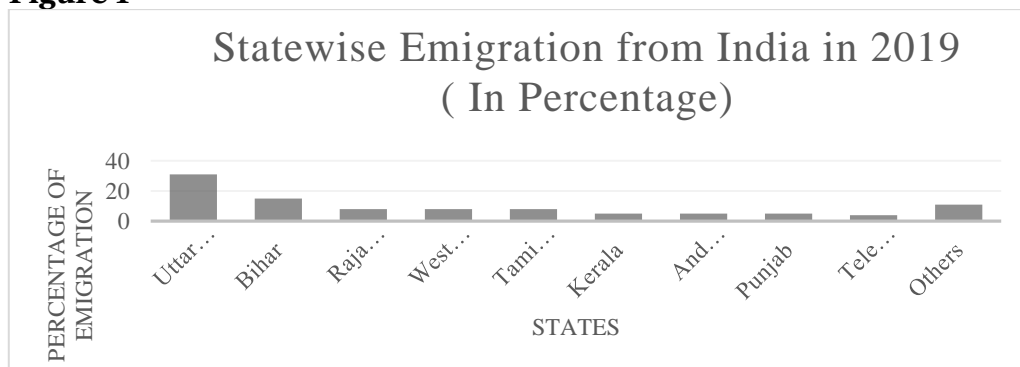
The UNDESA report revealed that in 2017, 1.65 million Indians lived outside India, with more than half in the GCC countries. As per the annual report (2019-20) published by the Ministry of External Affairs (MOEA), about 3.34 lakh Indian workers migrated to different ECR countries in 2019. Most have gone to various Gulf nations (See Table 1). As per the PEW research report, Muslims of India are more emigrating in nature than Hindus. Muslims constitute only 14% of the total Indian population (per the 2011 census), while they represent 27% of the migrants from India. Most Muslim migrants from India presently reside in different GCC countries.

Table 1

Workers Emigrated from India to Various ECR Countries (in Lakhs) in 2019

Name of the countries	Year-2019 (30.11.2019)
Saudi Arabia	1.43
UAE	0.72
Kuwait	0.42
Qatar	0.28
Oman	0.26
Bahrain	0.09
Malaysia	0.10
Others	0.04
Total	3.34

Source: Annual Report (2019-20), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

Figure 1

Source: Protector of Emigration, MOEA, Government of India, Computed by the Authors in 2021

According to the data published by MOEA (2019), Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, and Telangana are the leading states for sending migrant labour outside India, mainly to the Gulf. Figure 1 shows the percentage of emigrated persons from these states during 2019.

It is clear from the chart above (Figure 1) that employees from West Bengal are consistently expressing interest in settling in other GCC nations, in addition to those from Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar. The data also showed that during the past 20 years, a sizable number of workers from West Bengal have travelled to numerous GCC nations. Over 25,000 workers went from West Bengal to various Gulf countries in 2018. Thus, along with Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar, West Bengal is becoming one of India's main states that exports workers. The likely causes are declining salaries, a lack of decent-paying jobs with good benefits, an

increase in the frequency of unemployment, and rapid population expansion.

Researchers revealed that Gulf migration is mostly a Muslim-dominated phenomenon. There are several Muslim-dominated or oriented districts of West Bengal from which migrant workers are involved in emigration into the GCC countries. Murshidabad, South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, Burdwan, and Nadia are significant districts that send migrant labour to the GCC countries. All these districts have a sizable number of Muslims in their total population. Murshidabad and South 24 Parganas are the top two Muslim-numbered districts in West Bengal and India, with 47,07573 and 29,03075 Muslim populations per the 2011 census. As per the MOEA data, all the districts are presently on the list of India's top 50 migrant-sending districts. As per the Ministry of External Affairs (MOEA) e-migration portal reports, from 2015 to 2018, more than 20000

workers migrated from the South 24 Parganas district to the Gulf countries. Various Muslim-dominated CD blocks, such as Magrahat I, Magrahat II, Falta, Bishnupur I, and Bishnupur II, are significant in sending migrant labour. As block-wise data on migration is not available, it is not possible to figure out the exact block-wise number of Migrant workers.

Numerous studies have analysed different facets of Muslim workers' migration to the Gulf from different Indian states. The current study, conducted at the micro level, looked into the status of Gulf migration and how it affected Muslim employees in several areas within the Falta CD block in the South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. Different parts of the block are exclusively Muslim, and the majority of Muslim workers frequently travel to Gulf or GCC nations. It is challenging to locate a home with migrants from communities other than Muslims who are employed in the Gulf. Several villages, namely, Mollarthesh, Hasim Nagar, Gopalpur, Jafarpur, Tripurapur, Mamudpur, and Mallikpur, are a few of the areas from where Muslims involved in the emigration process to be settled mainly in the Gulf countries.

Objectives

The study has been carried out with the following objectives:

1) To study the financial condition of Muslim workers before and after

emigration into Gulf countries and to understand how Gulf migration affects Muslims' economies.

2) To compare the financial status of emigrant and non-migrant Muslim workers.

Research Questions

The study will address the following questions based on the study's objectives.

1. What is the nature of Muslim Gulf migrants, and why do they migrate to Gulf countries?
2. What are the socioeconomic characteristics of these migrants?
3. Are there any differences in socioeconomic status between migrant and non-migrant workers and their families?

Material and Method

The study adopted a quantitative technique to reach its objective. The study at the bottom is explorative and is mainly based on primary data. The household survey was done between January and February 2021. One hundred households (sample respondents) were chosen (50 each from the emigrant and non-migrant workers' families) from 5 Muslim-dominated villages of the block for personal interviews. These villages are Mollarthesh, Hasim Nagar, Gopalpur, Tripurapur and Zafarpur. A purposive sampling technique has been adopted to choose sample respondents from migrant and non-migrant households. Two semi-structured questionnaires with both

open- and closed-ended questions were prepared to gather various socioeconomic and demographic data from both the households of migrant and non-migrant workers, using face-to-face interviews with a member of the sample households. The questionnaire was then pre-tested to test the validity of the questions. After that, all unwarranted questions were removed, and final questionnaires were prepared. Households with at least one worker working in different Gulf nations for five years or have worked before for at least five years have been chosen. The chain sampling (also known as snowball sampling) technique is employed to identify sample respondents from both emigrant and non-emigrant workers. Thanks to the chain referral system, the author connected with a challenging demographic to sample. Numerous socioeconomic statistics are gathered from households with and without migrants. All the data are translated into percentages and ratios and displayed through bar graphs and charts. This makes comprehending how the emigration process improves the place's local economic and financial situation easier.

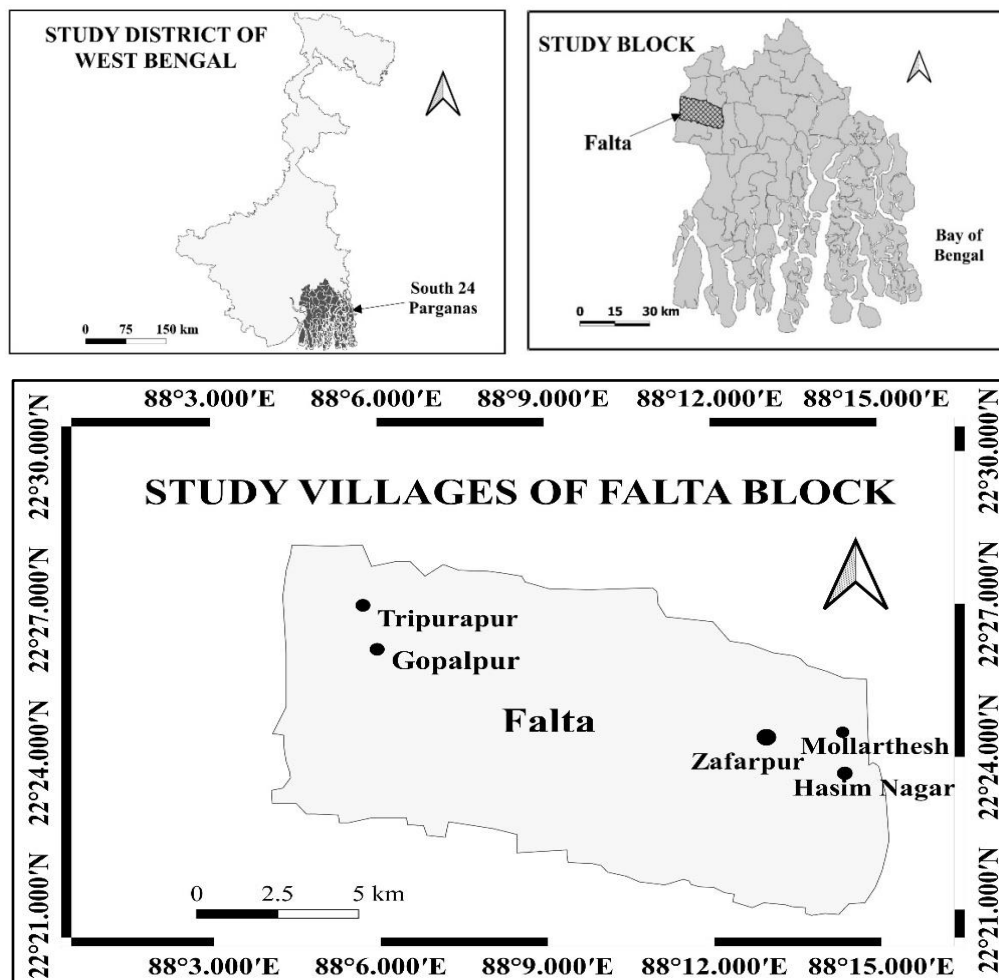
Study Area

Falta block of South 24 Parganas district is situated in the southern part of West Bengal near the stretch of Hooghly River. This zone is considered a Special Economic Zone

(SEZ) and an assembly constituency of West Bengal. The CD block is bounded by the Budge Budge 2 and Bishnupur 2 CD blocks in the north, the Magrahat 1 CD block in the east, the Diamond Harbour 1 & 2 CD blocks in the south and the Hooghly River in the east.

According to the District Statistical Handbook, the Falta CD block has an area of 130.68 sq. km. It has one Panchayet Samity, Thirteen-gram Panchayats, 186 Gram Sansads, 133 revenue mouzas and 129 inhabited villages. According to the 2011 census of India, the Falta CD block had a total population of 249561, of which 226162 were rural and 23399 were urban. About 77% of the total population of the block is literate, compared to 77.51% of the total population of South 24 Parganas and 77.08% of the total population of West Bengal. As per the census of India in 2011, about 87352 Muslims lived in the Falta block, accounting for 35.00% of the total population of the CD block. In Falta, among the total workers, cultivators formed 7.31%, agricultural labour formed 14.92%, household industry constituted 4.89%, and 45.16% of workers are considered as the other types of workers, which include factory, mining, plantation and different activities which are not included in the previous category. There are also 27.72% of workers known as marginal workers (Table 2).

Figure 2
Study Area



Source: Prepared By the Author

Table 2

Percentage of Different Category Workers in Falta, 2001 and 2011

Type	2001		2011	
	Number of workers	% of Workers	Number of workers	% of Workers
Cultivators	7759	8.28	6478	7.31
Agricultural Labour	22763	24.29	13220	14.92
Household Industries	6397	6.83	4331	4.89
Other Workers	36128	38.56	40013	45.16
Marginal Workers	20638	22.03	24556	27.72
Total Workers	93685	100	88598	100
Non-workers	148648	NA	160953	NA

Source: Census of India 2001 & 2011, District Primary Census abstract 2011 and computed by the authors

Table 2 shows the changes in the economic activities of the workers of the Falta block from 2001 to 2011. All agricultural activities have been reduced, and other activities have increased simultaneously. A sizable number of people also increase the frequency of the non-working population. So, it is assumed that agriculture and allied activities are becoming less important and less preferred in the area as most workers have joined in other economic activities. The lower wages and inconsistency in the agricultural sector are probably the reasons behind it.

Muslims of West Bengal

Muslims in West Bengal live in both Rural and Urban areas. The majority of them are concentrated in rural areas. Both the rural and urban Muslims suffered from poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and other social problems. However, the situation is critical in rural areas where the Muslim population shares most of West Bengal (Biswas, 2015 pp, 263)). Muslims are the principal minority and second-largest religious group after the Hindus in India and West Bengal. According to the Census of India 2011, they constitute 14.64% of the population in India and 27.0% of the population in West Bengal. Murshidabad district has the largest Muslim community, with 66.27% of the total population, followed by Maldah (51.27%), Uttardinajpur

(49.92%), Birbhum (37.06%) and South 24 Parganas (35.57%). Muslims lack a share of political power and social status. Their numerical population strength is still lower than that of the majority community in Indian society. In West Bengal, Muslims are in a disadvantaged position in terms of getting facilities or infrastructure, even though they constitute the majority population of a district. (Mainuddin, 2011, pp-124-125). Regarding the total number of Muslims in the population, the South 24 Parganas district is presently the second largest Muslim district in West Bengal after Murshidabad, as per the census data 2011.

It is estimated that about 10.5% of Muslim workers engaged in trade, lower than the Hindu workers (12.3%) in West Bengal. Self-employed workers among Muslims are about 52.6%, which is more than the Hindu self-employed workers, who are 44.6 % (Sachar Committee Report 2006, p. 342–343). A report published in The Indian Express on February 15 2016, written by Esha Roy, stated that 'almost 80% of Rural Muslims in West Bengal are borderline poor'. The article also intimated that as per the SNAP Report (Non-profit Organization), rural Muslims are mainly involved in agricultural activities or daily work in non-agricultural sectors.

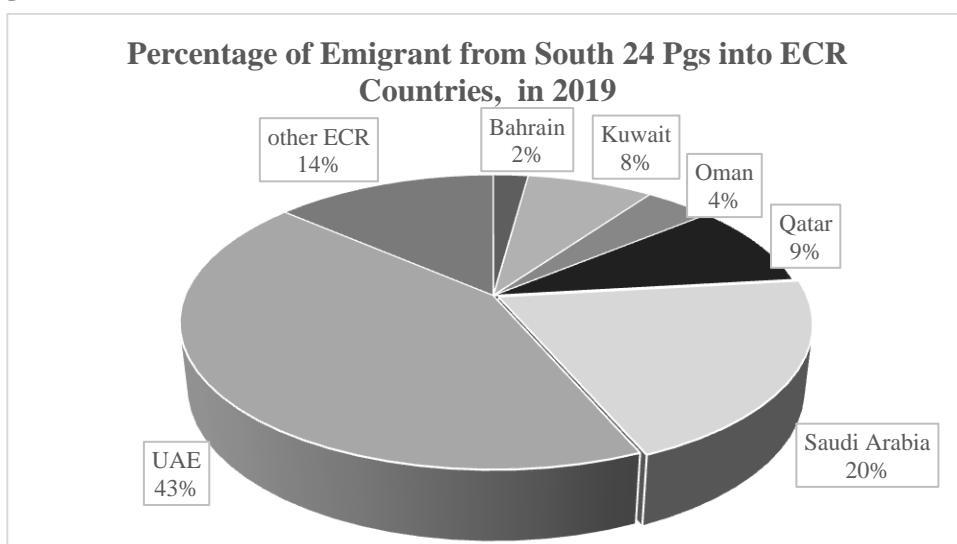
Table 3

Different CD Block-Wise Muslim Population in South 24 Parganas

CD Block	Total population	Hindu		Muslim	
		Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage
Magrahat 1	269494	108987	40.44	155770	57.8
Magrahat 2	304744	148091	48.6	152412	50.01
Bishnupur 1	232365	147636	63.54	72219	31.08
Bishnupur 2	214531	132844	61.92	80651	37.59
Falta	249561	161873	64.86	87352	35

Source: Census of India, 2011

Figure 3



Source: Protector of Emigration, MOEA, Govt. of India, Computed by the Authors in 2021

Table 4

Destination Country of Emigrant Workers from the Study Area

Destination Country	Workers emigrated from the study area	Percentage of workers
Qatar	11	16.64
Saudi Arabia	13	23.21
UAE	28	50.0
Others	4	7.14

Source: Field survey, January 2021

Muslims of South 24 Parganas, West Bengal

Agriculture is the major source of livelihood for both the Muslim and Hindu communities of South 24 Parganas, as they work as cultivators or agricultural labourers. Muslim participation in the government sector is very small. The share of migrant workers is quite sizable in this district. Almost 65 % of migrant Muslim workers are involved in long-term migration. The majority of these workers migrated within the district or state. About 21.57% of Muslims Migrate to towns outside the State of West Bengal. So, it is expressed that there are no pull factors for attracting migrant labour into Kolkata as the city has become less attractive to job seekers from the villages (MCD Project Report, South 24 Parganas, pp. 28-29). As per the census data 2011, there is a 35.57% Muslim population in the South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. Among the 29 CD blocks of the district, it has been seen that there are some CD blocks from where Muslim workers continuously go abroad for employment. These blocks are Falta, Magrahat I, Magrahat II, Bishnupur I, and Bishnupur II. The percentage of Muslim populations in these blocks is presented in Table 3.

Muslims in these neighbourhoods, therefore, have an important role in the local economy and society. The workforce from the Muslim population is less technically skilled and educated. It is frequently getting tougher for them to engage in

decent work with good pay. They can migrate to the Gulf nations, where they can find well-paying work and do so quickly. This micro-level study is adopted to determine the economic effects of Muslim workers' migration to the Gulf from the Falta CD Block in the South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal.

Result and Discussion

Destination Country

The unskilled and semi-skilled labourers from the Muslim community are interested in different Gulf countries. The following chart (Figure 3) shows the percentage of emigrants who have gone to the ECR (Emigration Checked Required) countries from South 24 Parganas in 2019. Among all the ECR countries, the Gulf nation is the leading destination for migrant workers. UAE remains the main destination for the workers, whereas Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait are also the important destinations for migrant workers.

The primary survey data are almost similar to the data published by the MOEA in 2019. As per the field study (Table 4), about 28 workers out of 56 (50% of workers) are working or have worked before in the UAE. Saudi Arabia and Qatar are the next best choice for the workers to go and settle in these nations, as 23.21% and 19.64% of workers are working or have worked there. Only 7.14% of workers work or have worked in several other GCC countries like Kuwait, Bahrain, etc.

Gross Monthly Family Income

There is a huge difference in the gross monthly income of families of Muslim emigrants before and after emigration. Based on the field survey (Table 5), nearly 48% of the 50 families had a gross monthly income of Rs.5000-10000 before migration to the Gulf. About 32% of families of emigrant workers had a gross monthly income of less than Rs.5000. Most importantly, before migration, every family had a gross income of less than Rs. 30000 per month.

Things altered once they moved to the Gulf. According to data from the field survey (Table 5), around 52% of the families of the sample's emigrant workers currently make between Rs. 20001 and Rs. 30000 monthly. Approximately 26% and 14% of the studied households have gross monthly incomes of Rs. 30001–40000 and Rs. 10001-20000, respectively. Significantly, no Muslim emigrant home was found to have a

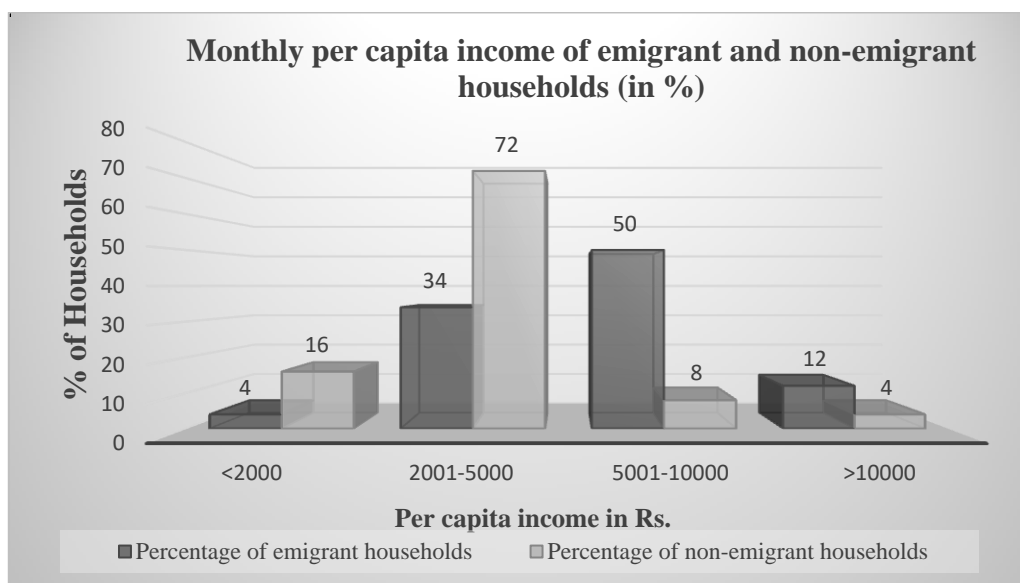
monthly income of less than Rs. 1000, while roughly 8% of households have a gross monthly Income of more than Rs. 40,000. As a result, the study discovered a considerable disparity between Muslim migrant households' gross monthly income before and after departure. Fifty non-migrant samples (households) had average gross monthly incomes comparable to those of emigrant households before the emigration of their members. Families of non-migrant employees make between Rs. 1000 and Rs. 200000 in gross monthly income. Almost 28% of households make between Rs. 5001 and Rs. 10000 monthly. Only 10% of families make between Rs. 20001 and Rs. 30000 in monthly gross income, compared to 8% of households that earn between Rs. 3001 and Rs. 40000. About 2% of non-migrant worker families (Table 5) have a gross income of more than Rs. 40000 per month.

Table 5

Gross Monthly Income of Emigrant and Non-Migrant Muslim Workers

Income in Rs.	Percentage of the Family of Migrant workers		Percentage of the Family of Non-migrant Workers
	Before emigration	After emigration	
<5000	32	0	2
5001-10000	48	0	28
10001-20000	18	14	50
20001-30000	2	52	10
30001-40000	0	26	8
>40000	0	8	2

Source: Field survey, January 2021

Figure 4

Source: Field survey, January 2021

Table 6

Assets Possessed by the Families of Emigrant and Non-Emigrant Workers

Assets possessed	Percentage of the family (emigrant)	Percentage of the family (non-emigrant)
Land	92	82
TV	76	58
Computer	14	6
Refrigerator	58	24
Washing machine	14	4
Two-wheeler	34	16
Car/Four-wheeler	4	0
LPG	89	26

Source: Field survey, January 2021

Per Capita Income

Figure 4 shows the per capita income of migrant families. According to the study, almost 50% of households of emigrant workers have a monthly per capita income of Rs.5000 to

Rs.10000. About 34% of these households have a per capita income of Rs.2000-5000. Almost 12% of these sampled households have a monthly per capita income of more than Rs.10000, and only 4% of

families of migrant workers have a per capita income of less than Rs.2000.

Families of non-migrant employees frequently struggle financially. The fact that these families' per capita income is substantially lower than that of emigrant worker households illustrates this reality. The per capita income for these families is displayed in Figure 5. More than 72% of homes, according to the survey, have a per capita income of between Rs. 2000 and Rs. 4000 per month, while only 4% of households have a per capita income of over Rs. 10000. 16% of these families have a monthly per capita income of less than Rs. 2000. Only 8% of households have a monthly per capita income of Rs. 5001 to 10,000.

Assets Possessed

The assets owned understand households' financial state and status. Data on a family's total assets are gathered in the household survey. According to the study, 92% of emigrant households had land, compared to 82% of non-emigrant worker households (Table 6). Nearly 58% of homes have refrigerators, and 76% of emigrant worker families have a TV. Additionally, 14% of these households utilise computers. However, only 24% of non-emigrant worker families use a refrigerator, and only 58% own a TV. Two-wheeler ownership is now prevalent among

lower middle-class families. Approximately 34% of emigrant worker households have at least one two-wheeler, compared to only 16% of non-emigrant worker households. A computer is only present in 6% of non-migrant households. A washing machine is an uncommon item for those living in rural areas. However, only 4% of non-emigrant worker homes have a washing machine compared to 14% of emigrant worker households. Four-wheelers are owned by 4% of emigrant worker households, while neither a car nor a four-wheeler is found in any non-migrant family. Approximately 89% of migrant worker families utilise LPG, compared to only 26% of non-migrant families.

Average Monthly Wages

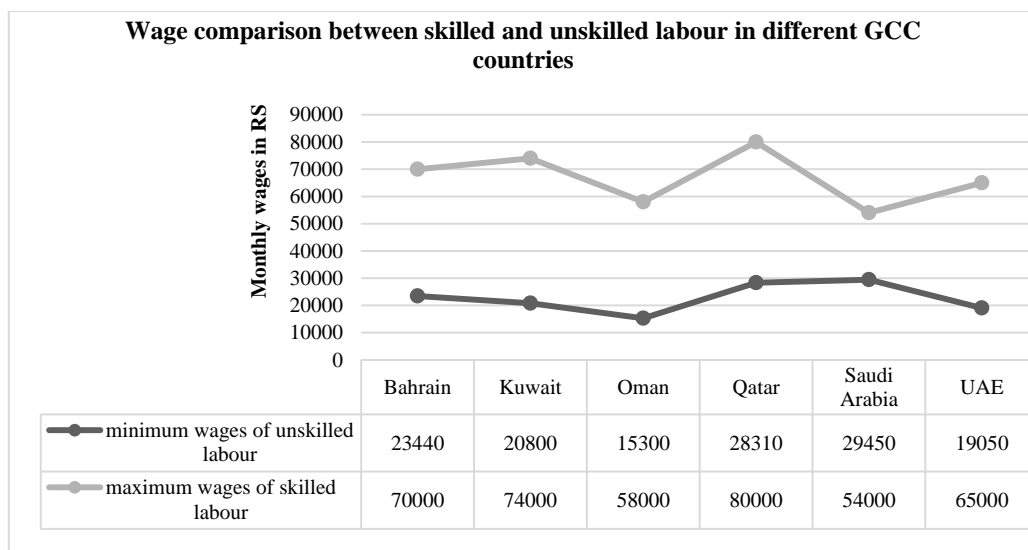
The average earnings of labour in the GCC and non-migrant employees employed here have significantly diverged. In the Gulf, there has also been a significant salary difference between skilled and semi-skilled workers. Figure 6 displays the minimum pay for highly skilled and low-skilled workers in various GCC nations. All GCC nations, except Oman, have a minimum income of Rs. 20000 per month for unskilled labour, according to information provided by the Ministry of External Affairs (e-migrate portal) in 2021. In the GCC nations, skilled labour can make at least Rs. 60000 per month. This demonstrates the enormous

salary gap between India and the GCC.

The income information of 56 migrant workers and 69 non-migrant workers are gathered during the survey. According to the survey, emigrant workers make significantly more monthly income than non-migrant workers. According to the data in Table 7, more than 47% of emigrant workers make between Rs. 20,000 and 30,000 per month. Almost 35% of emigrant workers make between Rs. 30000 and 40000. Only 10.9% of these workers make

less than Rs. 20,000 per month, and about 8% earn more than Rs. 45,000 per month. On the other hand, 48.38% of non-migrant workers may earn between Rs.10000 and Rs.20,000 per month and about 46.78% of non-emigrant Muslim workers earn less than Rs.10000. Only 4% of non-migrant workers can make more than Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 45000 in a month, whereas it has been discovered that no worker can make more than Rs. 45,000.

Figure 5



Source: Minimum Wages and Allowances for Notified Countries in e-Migrate System, MOEA, Overseas Employment Division, accessed in 2021 and Computed by the authors.

With this, the main driver of the rising emigration rate from India to the GCC countries is the high earnings of unskilled workers or assistants.

Table 7*Average Monthly Wages of Emigrant and Non-Emigrant Workers*

Wages in Rs.	Percentage of Emigrant workers into the Gulf	Percentage of Non-emigrant Workers
<10000	00	46.78
10001-20000	10.90	48.38
20001-30000	47.20	3.22
30001-45000	34.50	1.16
>45000	7.40	00

Source: Field survey, January 2021

Table 8*House Types of Emigrant and Non-Emigrant Workers*

House types	Percentage of the family of emigrant	Percentage of the family of non-emigrant
Earthen	4	26
Semi-concrete	24	34
Concrete	48	34
Multi-storied	22	6
Palatial	2	0

Source: Field survey, January 2021

House Types

The design and layout of a home ultimately reflect the family's economic situation. The survey found that Muslim immigrants' residences are of a much higher standard than those of local non-emigrant workers. 48% of the 50 emigrant worker households examined (Table 8) had concrete homes, whereas 24% had semi-concrete homes. Only 4% of families live in earthen homes, compared to about 22% of emigrant households that live in multi-story buildings. Only 2% of migrant worker households reside in wealthy homes. On the other hand, roughly 34% of non-migrant households have homes that are made of concrete or semi-concrete. Only 6% of non-migrant

households have multi-story structures, and nearly 24% live in earthen structures. There is not a single non-immigrant working family that possesses a mansion.

Monthly Savings Status

Table 9 shows the savings status of emigrant and non-emigrant workers. Savings refers to the net surplus of funds for an individual or household after all the regular expenses and obligations have been done. The amount of savings reflects a family's financial security and saturation. Rich and wise people typically have funds set aside for the future. According to the survey, 48% of emigrant worker households save more than Rs. 100,000 monthly. 38% of families have a monthly savings

capacity of Rs. 5000–10,000. Only 4% of emigrant worker families can save less than Rs. 2000 per month, compared to 10% who can only hold between Rs. 2000 and Rs. 5000 per month. However, non-emigrant Muslim workers' families find it difficult to save much money for the future. Around 44% of these households save less than Rs. 2000 monthly. Families of non-migrant employees save an average of 26% of Rs 2001-5000 and 6% of Rs 5001-10000 monthly. Only 6% of families hold more than Rs. 100,000, and 18% of these households cannot save anything for the future.

Problems Faced by the Emigrant Workers

Unlike the many advantages of migrating to the GCC nations, local employees must deal with challenges before, during, or after emigration. Table 10 shows that roughly 45% of migrant workers had issues with their passports and concerns with their agencies. Most migrant labourers are from lower-income households. Thus, they must overcome significant challenges while saving the initial monies required for emigration to GCC nations. Approximately 85.71% of migrant employees experienced issues paying the initial cost of their migration. Additionally, several migrants believe that the standard of living and incomes in Gulf nations are steadily declining.

Table 9

Savings Status of the Families of Emigrant and Non-Migrant Workers

Savings amount in Rs.	Percentage of Households of Emigrant Workers	Percentage of Households of Non-migrant Workers
NIL	0	18
<2000	4	44
2001-5000	10	26
5001-10000	38	6
>10000	48	6

Source: Field survey, January 2021

Table 10

Problems Faced by the Emigrant Workers (Total 56 Workers)

Agency and Passport related issues	Problems related to initial expenditure	Decreasing wages of labour	Decreasing quality of work	Others
25 (44.46)	48 (85.71)	11 (19.64)	19 (33.92)	2 (3.57)

Source: Field survey, January 2021. Numbers in the parentheses indicate the percentage

Findings, Conclusion and Suggestions

Major Findings

From the above explanation, the major findings of the study can be listed below:

- Gulf migration is becoming increasingly common in the region and a solution to the current unemployment issues.
- Hindus continue to express little interest in visiting the GCC nations, likely due to their unique cultural faith. Muslims, however, are always prepared to travel to the Gulf. Most of the time, Gulf nations favour immigrant Muslims.
- Most Muslim labourers in India lack the education and skills necessary for high-paying positions.
- Muslim labourers primarily work in the Gulf's lower-skilled, minimum-wage jobs. Even though their pay was far higher than they had previously earned from their former work.
- These are remittances that workers receive and spend on things like child care, housing construction, land purchases, and more.
- Gulf migration tends to determine the nature of the society and economy of the area.
- Labour shortages often affect the activities where the workers were previously involved.
- On the negative side of migration, it is observed that workers have to

face difficulties regarding migration costs.

- Working conditions and wages in the Gulf are decreasing continuously daily.

Conclusion

Being a developing nation, India is the major source of migrant workers in the Gulf. Academics, scholars, and decision-makers have become aware of the rising Muslim emigration in West Bengal during the past few decades. It is seen that Muslim workers from various parts of West Bengal want to migrate to multiple Gulf nations. However, there is a lack of block-wise data on migrant Muslim workers from West Bengal. The fact that Muslims predominate in every Gulf nation is one of the causes. The culture is very reminiscent of that of Muslim migrant labourers. The labourers can stay and work in greater comfort in these nations. Muslim labourers are typically preferred in Gulf nations. The workers' lower levels of education and skill are likely another factor. Finding good work with good incomes in India and overseas is nearly hard for them. These workers are prohibited from entering various European and American nations. Therefore, Gulf is the greatest choice if they want to work elsewhere.

Their emigration to the Gulf significantly impacts the economy of these workers' families. The families' standard of living is rising. Their financial saturation allows them to take advantage of nearly all modern amenities. They were relatively

underprivileged and had a subpar standard of living before moving to the Gulf. In contrast, non-migrant employees and their families must deal with several financial and social challenges. Most of the time, they cannot make enough money to meet their needs. As a result, there has been a noticeable disparity in the financial situation and family structure of migrant and non-migrant workers. Apart from that, the workers who do not want to go abroad or who have not had a chance abroad remain unskilled and less technically developed in most cases.

Therefore, in comparison to Muslim families of non-emigrant workers in the Falta block, it can be argued that Muslim families with migrant workers into the Gulf are more progressive and financially saturated. The majority of the migrant workers need more education and technical expertise. According to the survey, most migrant workers in the Gulf are unskilled. Most of these employees initially struggled to gather the money required for departure. According to the report, they occasionally encounter challenges obtaining passports and visas from the appropriate agencies. However, they are determined to settle in the Gulf States at all costs. Interestingly, without having proper education and technical skills, the Muslim workers of the block eventually managed to earn much more money than the rest of the workers.

Suggestions

Muslims play a significant role in determining West Bengal's socioeconomic condition because they are the second-largest group there. Though it is not widely documented, West Bengali Muslims are marginalised. The government must, therefore, carefully monitor the recent role of Muslims in Gulf migration. Thus, information about Muslim immigrants' backgrounds, employment status, issues, and prospects is crucial for their growth.

The government should closely monitor the process of leaving the area. Numerous fictitious agencies are operating in the region and have committed multiple frauds. The government should take action to ensure the well-being of migrant workers. The government should publish a list of scam agencies to make people aware. Checking passports and visas should be simpler and more familiar to the staff. The government should keep a careful eye on the organisations in charge of immigration. The government should encourage technical education in rural and remote locations because most employment is unskilled. It is important to record information about commerce and religious exodus from India so that researchers can access it and develop fresh ideas for the welfare of the migrants.

According to the Sachar Committee Report, Muslims are a marginalised community in India, particularly in West Bengal. Muslims significantly lag behind other groups in terms of socioeconomic and

demographic statistics. However, Muslims can progress, change their socioeconomic standing, and reduce poverty with remittances from the GCC nations. The government ought to support workers who want to immigrate to the GCC but cannot do so because they lack the necessary start-up money. The government may offer these workers brief loans with low interest rates.

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