

MIGRATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL DIFFUSION: THE KERALA EXPERIENCE

Muhammed Sihas KM¹, Mumitha Madhu² & Lekshmi V Nair³

¹Research Scholar, Department of Humanities, Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India

²Doctoral Fellow, Department of Sociology, South Asian University, New Delhi, India

³Associate Professor, Department of Humanities, Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology, Trivandrum, Kerala, India

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore gulf migration as a crucial factor which accelerated technological diffusion in Northern Kerala. Majority of the studies in this region pertaining to Gulf migration focuses mainly on the socio-economic impacts of the phenomena. The tremendous role it has played in bringing about technological prosperity in the region is an area less explored. In a state like Kerala where livelihood and sustenance of majority of the population were based on agriculture and animal husbandry about 40 decades ago, the impact that technological diffusion has brought into various facets of life is remarkable. What triggered this shot is an interesting question to be pondered upon. Statistical records indicate a somewhat dramatic progression in the number of people migrating to other countries and mainly to the Gulf countries in the past 40 years. This record, as well as many other literatures that shed light into the history and effect of gulf migration, helps to draw a very close link between migration and technological diffusion as well as its accompaniments in Northern Kerala. The method adopted for the current study is a mainly unstructured interview. Interviews were done in the Malappuram district which has a higher concentration of families where migration has happened. Gulf migration has resulted in a widespread increase in the literacy rates in Northern Kerala. It has opened up new choices of occupation, new arenas for investment. It has raised the standard of living of the people back at homes to a certain extend. It has been influential in introducing new cultural practices too. In short, the role of gulf migration in the extensive spread of technology and its pervasiveness in the daily lives of these people is the point that this paper seeks to engage with.

KEYWORDS: Migration, Technological Diffusion, Literacy, Culture, Lifestyle, Technological Remittance