

Indian Diaspora in Dubai (UAE)

Paper Submission: 15/08/2021, Date of Acceptance: 26/08/2021, Date of Publication: 27/08/2021

Abstract

Ever Since the discovery of oil in Dubai, the region has been transformed from a nomadic desert to a wealthy modern city overnight (70-80 Years in a Nation's History is Overnight). In 1950 with a total population of two thousand (2000) *Emaratis* and with a vision of creating a global business hub literally "AS SOON AS POSSIBLE", the phenomenal growth of Dubai required people, in order to cope with the expansion, therefore an influx of Indian foreign workers migrated to the most desolate corner of the world. The entry of foreigners for labour and employment purposes has been a structural imperative, as oil related development required the transfer of foreign technologies and skilled knowledge and manpower which were hitherto sorely lacking in these countries. In Dubai migrants have become the dominant labour force in sectors ranging from the economy to government to semi-government institutions unlike in western countries where foreign workers complement the national workforce by filling the less skilled jobs. The number of foreign workers has continued to grow and today constitute most of the major workforce in Dubai. Today an estimated 2.62 Million Indians reside in Dubai. Indians in UAE constitute the largest part of the population of the country. Over 3.42 Million Indian expats are estimated to be living in the UAE, which is over 38% of the total population of the UAE. These workers have contributed to the growth, advancements in all sectors like construction, finance, hospitality, medicine, IT and education etc.

Keywords: Migration, UAE, Indian Diaspora, Population, Economic Hub.

Introduction

Migration is a natural phenomenon. For years people have migrated from one place to another. The Babylonian here are many causes of migration and unemployment, war and other natural calamities have led to migration. Dubai, the economic hub of UAE, attracted people from all over the world for better jobs. India is a densely populated country and people looked for better futures in the middle-east and the migration from India to UAE dates back to the 1960s when Dubai carried out several oil exploration projects in Dubai. Mobility of human resources is an essential feature of today's globalized world where interconnected world markets, networks and technology all lead to growing migration.

The Diaspora is derived from the Greek word composed of *día* and *speirein*, literally meaning to scatter or to spread or also to "displace". In a generic sense this refers to communities of migrants living or settled permanently in other countries or peoples moving from their homelands to a different location due to economic, political, or generally the natural movement of peoples from densely populated areas moving to lesser populated regions. In most case this is a natural phenomenon, a "Human Tendency" to spread out. The concept of "Diaspora" dates back many centuries. This was originally used to refer to the dispersion of Jews after the exile in 586 BC and communities of Jews scattered in exile outside Palestine. Over a period, the term Diaspora has become embedded in reference to communities active outside their homeland territories while three common factors have become in analysing its relevance:

1. Diaspora migrants contribute their contribution to the growth and development of the region.
2. Diaspora continue to use their ingenious languages and particular sets of religious beliefs in their new migrated countries.
3. Diaspora continue to foster both social and economic links back home to their country. Especially in countries where remittances play a vital role in the economy of the homeland.

The Diaspora is becoming an important factor in India's relations with the UAE. UAE has been hosting one of the largest expatriate populations from India over decades. The United Nations 2017 *International Migration Report* said there are now 3.3million Indian-Born people in the UAE, which is almost four times the figure in 2000, when the Emirates had 0.9 million



Arshi Feroze Zaidi
Research Scholar,
Dept. of Sociology,
University of Lucknow,
Lucknow, U.P., India

Indian-born residents.

Aim of the Study

This article aims to explore the INDO UAE relationship which dates back to the 1960s. The influx of a vast number of migrants is coming to Dubai and making Dubai a melting pot of cultures.

Indian Migration to Dubai

The Indians have outnumbered the locals and have contributed in the development of Dubai. The world's tallest structure Burj-Al-Khalifa and 'unprecedented' engineering marvel, was built with a major contribution from India- a vast labour force. The tower which stands over 800m and with 160 floors, and is equipped with the world's fastest elevators that will travel 64km/ph besides the world's tallest performing musical fountain.

Indians by and large, hold a vast majority of the jobs in both skilled and unskilled sectors in Dubai. Migration of workers from India to Dubai dates back from the 1950s, with the exploration of Oil and expansion of the Trading Sectors, the flow of workers continued as workers from the South Asian country arrived in Dubai in hordes looking for greener pastures.

According to 2020/2021 statistics provided by the Indian Government, the Indian expatriate community in UAE comprises 70 percent of the workforce in the construction sector, skilled and unskilled sectors, 25% comprises jobs in professional sectors like Medical, Academics, IT in both Government & Private Sectors. Most workers come from Southern states including Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu while the rest are from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Rajasthan.

Throughout the period of economic liberalisation, the Indian diaspora has played a vital role in contributing to India's growth and development.

Remittances from UAE to India

India currently receives the largest remittances sent to any country by the overseas population. UAE is a leading nation in sending remittances to India. A large number of skilled & unskilled workers work in the UAE. As the saying goes in the UAE amongst the Indian Expatriate community in the UAE, "Everything is Permanently Temporary and Temporarily Permanent" (By S.S.A. Zaidi, General Manager - RTS Investments, Dubai (lived here for 36 years)), the longevity of stay and work in the UAE is solely dependent on the expatriate's job, i.e. if a person loses his / her job, he has 30 - 60 days to leave the country. The number of years of service does not matter in a situation like this. The battle for the expatriate community is to survive, live and work in the UAE for as long as possible and mostly this desire to continue is solely based on financial needs.

In 2020, remittances from UAE to India recorded a sharp 15.6% decline compared to 2019 following the repatriation of Indians during the pandemic due to job losses, economic decline and completion and delaying of projects, according to the World Bank Dh165 billion to their home countries.

Source: World Bank (2012)

Conclusion

UAE is India's most favoured nation in terms of exports & imports. As the city Dubai connects to 70 destinations in INDIA with innumerable flights to Dubai. India has contributed to Tourism, a high number of unskilled & skilled workers work in Dubai, Indian Entrepreneurs invested in Dubai in all sectors from food industry to construction. *Arab News*, in a recent report, came out with figures stating that "across all sectors, it was estimated that Indians constituted / contributed to 40% of the total workforce in the UAE".

Given the ups and downs of urban life, trials and tribulations, challenges and benefits, like any other hustling bustling city, Dubai continues to remain a home and host to a large number of Indians, most have benefitted from the growth of Dubai while there are a few different stories as well, just like any other big city in the world. Despite all odds, the contribution of the Indian community in the development and growth of Dubai remains undeniable and will be remembered in history as a major contributing factor for the overall growth of UAE and Dubai in particular.

References

1. *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, pp 63–76.
2. *Anthony, B and P Mark*. 2004 'Energy Security: India, China and Middle East Oil', in *Lowy*
3. *Institute Issue Brief*, December, Perth, WA: Lowy Institute, pp 5–10.
4. *Arabian Business (Dubai)*. 2011 *List of 30 Richest Indians in the Gulf*, 25 September.
5. *Arabicknowledge@Wharton*. 2010 *Is the Gulf Dream Fading for the Indian*
6. *Naufel, George*. 2010. "Remittances from GCC Countries: A Brief Outlook". *Middle East Institute*, Washington.
7. *Guota, Poonam*. 2005. "Macroeconomic Determinants of Remittances: Evidence from India". *IMF Working Paper WP/05/224* (December).
8. *Millis, Bryanna, Manuel Orozco & Zaki Raheem*. 2008. *Mining Remittance Data: Practical Considerations on Survey Design and Administration*. USAID (September).

9.