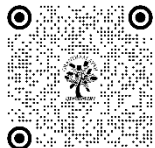


MIGRATION WITHIN FRAMES: REPRESENTATION OF GULF MIGRATION IN THE CARTOONS OF KERALAM

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ABSTRACT

The present study assumes that cartoons, as a visual product of culture, wraps social reality in humour. The cartoonists from Keralam have actively and consistently represented the socio-cultural evolution of the state. The transformation of agrarian economy into a Gulf remittance economy can be visualized in the cartoon series in the decades of 1970s and 1980s. Migration refers to the flow or movement of people to a new country for several reasons, the major ones being the settlement based on better employment opportunities and standard of living. Migration has been a crucial factor in the social and economic framework of Keralam in the twentieth century. This phenomenon was especially and almost exclusively known as the Gulf Migration, whereby a majority of the migrants from Kerala were in the countries in the Middle East – popularly referred to in Malayalam as ‘the Gulf’. Gulf migration is a favoured topic of novels and movies at that time in Keralam, but the representation of the same can also be found in the cartoons as well. This study focuses on the representation of Gulf boom in the cartoons of Keralam roughly spanning from 1950 to 2000. The intention of the paper is to look backwards into the history of Keralam to interrogate the representation of migration in select cartoons in Malayalam (published between 1950 and 2000) presenting how Keralam become the ‘Kerala Model’ and beyond.

Keywords: Cartoons, Culture, Gulf Migration, Keralam, Migration

1. INTRODUCTION

Migration refers to the flow or movement of people to a new country for several reasons, the major ones being the settlement based on better employment opportunities and standard of living. Migration has been a crucial factor in the social and economic framework of Keralam in the twentieth century. This phenomenon was especially and almost exclusively known as the Gulf Migration, whereby a majority of the migrants from Kerala were in the countries in the Middle East – popularly referred to in Keralam as ‘the Gulf’. Gulf migration is a favoured topic of novels and movies at that time in Keralam, but the representation of the same can

also be found in the cartoons as well. While the Gulf migration continued currency in the twenty first century, of late – to be precise in the previous decade – the trends have changed. The overall migration from Keralam shows a negative trend. The people migrating to the Gulf have decreased, and the popular choice of the migrants has become the European countries. In this context, discussions on migration have gained currency and it invokes curiosity to find how the issue is represented in art and literature. This sets the intention of the paper to look backwards into the social, economic, and cultural history of Keralam to interrogate the representation of migration in the cartoons in Malayalam.

A chronological scrutiny of the history of Keralam makes it clear that the Gulf boom of the 1970s served as the catalyst for the rapid progress in the socio-economic transformation of the state. The Gulf boom refers to the overseas migration of the people of Keralam to the Middle East from the late 1960s to early 1980s until the present day. According to B. A. Prakash, migrant households attained higher income levels because of the Gulf migration which subsequently aided in reducing paucity in the state. [Prakash \(1998\)](#), 3209.

This study focuses on the representation of this Gulf boom in the Malayalam cartoons published between 1950 and 2000. The cartoonists of the state have actively and consistently represented the socio-cultural evolution of Keralam from its birth as an independent state in 1956 and throughout its formative years to become the ‘Kerala Model’ and beyond. The present study assumes that cartoons, as a visual product of culture, wraps social reality in humour and in doing so, captures the economic hike of Keralam due to Gulf migration and the subsequent effects on the socio economic and cultural scenario of the state.

The discovery of oil resources in Arab regions and the following growth in their economy because of oil export attracted the educated unemployed youth of Keralam. The oil boom and the economic growth in the GCC countries in 1970s welcomed the Indian labourers, especially from Keralam, to try their luck in overseas migration. With their wages from the Gulf, the early migrants from financially lower class family bought better living conditions and social status. This elevated life style also rendered them as hot cakes in marriage market, considered worthy for alliances with upper class families as well. It can be observed as a silent, bloodless revolution that brought about equality and socialism. This led to a long march of Keralites to the Gulf region during the subsequent years. In his essay “The Indian Diaspora in Persian Gulf: An Analysis”, Satyanarayan Pattnayak observes that the count of Indians voyaging to the Middle East in pursuit of employment was 40,000 in the 1970s, ten lakhs in 1985, and around thirty five lakhs by 2000. [Pattnayak \(2008\)](#), 64.

The overseas migration of Malayalees began much before Gulf migration and can be understood as the first wave of overseas migration. During the British regime, several job-seeking Malayalees had been travelling in and outside the country in search of a better living. Many Malayalees who had received education in colonial India got accommodated in various posts under the British, and were considered as the elite class. Many of them were recruited outside the country as part of their job thus giving them exposure to various cultures and lifestyles across the world, and nostalgia motivated them to keep their connections with their homeland cordial. The cosmopolitan nature of Malayalees aided them in easily absorbing and being absorbed to the global events across the period. According to J. Devika, the social dynamics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have influenced different social groups of Keralam to go beyond the border, to open up opportunities for the state to integrate with the capitalist world economy. [Devika \(2012\)](#), 129.

In the second wave of migration as part of the Gulf boom, unlike the first wave, the migrants were especially the under educated, and a majority belonged to the lower class of the society which resulted in the mass migration and the resulting progress of the society. According to Samir Pradhan, there are four categories of overseas workers in the Gulf region: unskilled labourers like domestic servants and farm labourers, skilled labourers like carpenters and masons, professionals like doctors, teachers, and engineers and lastly persons who run their own businesses. Pradhan (2009), 20. Regardless of which labour category one was involved with, every non-resident Malayalee in the Middle East was called 'Gulfkaran' in Keralam, meaning 'a person from the Gulf'. Irrespective of their stature at workplace, every Malayalee seemed to enjoy the luxury of being addressed 'Gulfkaran' because it added worth to their social status in the state. Every family in Keralam has a member or relative in the Gulf region.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A few of the articles published with regards to the migration in Keralam are Ginu Zacharia Oommen's article "Gulf Migration, Social Remittances and Religion: The Changing dynamics of Kerala Christians" published in 2016 and Prema Kurien's "The impact of International Migration on Home Churches: The Marthoma Syrian Christian Church in India" in Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, both making a discussion about Migration and Kerala Christians. Osella and Osella in 2003 published "Migration and the Commoditisation of Ritual: Sacrifice, Spectacle and Contestations in Kerala, India" in Contributions to Indian Sociology, Vol.37. Similarly, Zacharia K. C. and Irudaya Rajan actively engage with the topic in "Gulf Revisited: Economic Consequences of Emigration from Kerala" (2004) "Kerala's Gulf Connection, 1998-2011: Economic and Social Impact of Migration" (2012). The same authors continue their engagement with discussing migration in "Emigration from Kerala: End of an Era" in 2018.

The aspect of female migration was discussed by Marie Percot in "Indian Nurses in the Gulf: Two Generations of Female Migration" presented at the Sixth Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting in 2005. Likewise, Mohamed Shafeeq Karinkurayil discusses the aspect of migration in Malayalam movies in "'Dubai' as a Place of Memory in Malayalam Cinema" published in International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society in 2022. The same author discussed the aspect of migration in photography in "Reading Aspiration in Kerala's Migrant Photography" published in South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies in 2020. While it true that several articles and studies have come up regarding migration in India as well as that in Keralam especially with reference to the Gulf migration, and its the socio-economic and cultural impact on the general ways of living, a similar study on the representation of the same in cartoons has not yet been made.

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Migration is a topic of discussion as well as concern in the academic and career circles of Keralam these days because unlike the Gulf migration of the yesteryears which contributed to the overall betterment of the GDP of the state, the alarming increase in migration of the youth from Keralam to European countries results in a negative growth in the economy because those who migrate have no intentions to come back. In this scenario, it is pertinent to trace the chronological representation of the evolution of the trends in migration in the state, which would facilitate a comparative analysis between the bygone era of Gulf migration and the migration

of the contemporary times. Cartoon as an important medium of visual significance has been utilized in the yesteryears by cartoonists to present the ordinary and daily aspects of migration. So, seeing how migration made an overall impact in the lived reality of ordinary people of the previous generation as represented in the cartoons would significantly influence seeing how the current trend in migration would impact the lived reality of the people of the present generation represented in cartoons if any.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Migration refers to the flow or movement of people to a new country for several reasons, the major ones being the settlement based on better employment opportunities and standard of living. Migration has been a crucial factor in the social and economic framework of Keralam in the twentieth century. This phenomenon was especially and almost exclusively known as the Gulf Migration, whereby a majority of the migrants from Kerala were in the countries in the Middle East – popularly referred to in Keralam as ‘the Gulf’. Gulf migration is a favoured topic of novels and movies at that time in Keralam, but the representation of the same can also be found in the cartoons as well. While the Gulf migration continued currency in the twenty first century, of late – to be precise in the previous decade – the trends have changed. The overall migration from Keralam shows a negative trend. The people migrating to the Gulf have decreased, and the popular choice of the migrants has become the European countries. In this context, discussions on migration have gained currency and it invokes curiosity to find how the issue is represented in art and literature. This sets the intention of the paper to look backwards into the social, economic and cultural history of Keralam to interrogate the representation of migration in the cartoons in Malayalam.

5. BRAINS BEHIND THE CARTOONS

A close analysis of the cartoons published between 1950 and 2000 by the major cartoonists shows that a clear picture of the life of Malayalees at the time of Gulf boom got recorded in them. Cartoonists Toms, Aravindan and Yesudasan have utilised this theme in their cartoons, and some of them are selected for the present analysis. Toms, or V. T. Thomas (1929-2016), a native of Alappuzha district in Keralam, immortalised the cartoon characters Boban and Moli through his serial cartoon strip “Bobanum Moliyum”. In 1957, he started his career as a freelancer for Malayala Manorama weekly. Toms kicked off his three decades long career in Malayala Manorama weekly. The cartoon series was a big hit during the time and later got published as anthologies in 2007 and 2013.

Govindan Aravindan (1935-1991), a native of Kottayam district in Keralam, instantly became famous with the cartoon series “Cheriyā Manushyarum Valiya Lokavum” (Small Men and Big World), that was serialized in Mathrubhumi weekly between 1961 and 1973. The cartoons got published as an anthology by DC Books in 1996. “Cheriyā Manushyarum Valiya Lokavum” (Small Men and Big World) started as an observation of the struggles of the unemployed youth but later its scope got extended to the socio economic problems and newer definitions of the cultural values in the post independent country.

Cartoonist Yesudasan (1938-2021) hails from Mavelikkara Taluk in Keralam, and is known for his social cartoons as well as political cartoons. In January 1981, the cartoon series “Mrs. Nair” appeared in Vanitha magazine and went on publishing

for thirty years. The present study focuses only on the social cartoon series “Mrs. Nair” among the plethora of cartoons created by Yesudasan.

6. REPRESENTATION OF MIGRATION IN CARTOONS

In one of Toms’ cartoons, a reference is made about the daughter of Chettan and Chettathi as working in Saudi Arabia. [Toms \(2013\)](#), 284. The term ‘Gulfkaran’ was associated with luxury. Some places in Keralam can rightly be called as a simulation of the Gulf and the extravagant lifestyle of the non-resident Malayalees, irrespective of their stature at workplace, often provoked the migrants to be eyed with envy by the government employees in the state. The investment of Gulf money in the non-productive sector, as part of the extravaganza and the exhibition of posh life, is shown in one of Toms’ cartoons where the Gulf migrant invests huge money for the construction of an opulent home with a competitive mentality with his neighbours. [Toms \(2013\)](#), 121. The prestigious entry of the overseas migrant labourer, usually addressed as ‘Gulfkaran’ is shown in another cartoon, where the rich costume and the foreign accessories are observed by the neighbours with wonder and envy, attributing a heroic image for the person. [Toms \(2007\)](#), 110, [Figure 1](#).

Figure 1



Figure 1 [Toms \(2007\)](#), 110.

At the beginning of Aravindan’s cartoon series in 1961, the protagonist Ramu is illustrated as an educated unemployed youth in search of a job. Some of his friends are shown employed either in the government or the private sector. The job opportunities of the 1960s in the cartoon series are shown to be flourishing outside the state of Keralam and limited within India. In the 1970s, the trend shifted from northern parts of India to outside the country. The character of Abu in the cartoon series exemplifies the Gulf boom and the economic growth of the state in its course to the ‘Kerala Model’. A parallel narration can be seen in the characterization of Mammed and his son Abu. Mammed owns a ‘peedika’, the word in Malayalam meaning a small shop, where he sells ‘beedi’ (cigarette) and lime juice. [Aravindan \(1996\)](#), 47. Later Mammed, an ex-military servant, sets off to join the war, possibly the Indo-china war and his son Abu takes over the charge of the shop. [Aravindan \(1996\)](#), 73. As years pass by, Abu involves in the business of foreign goods like watches, imported dress materials, shaving machine and radio. This marks the beginning of Gulf migration by the end of the decade of 1960s.

The nature of his job in the Middle East did not matter to them and he is treated with greater respect in his native place than a well-placed government official in the place. Marriage and family in the life of the ‘Gulfkaran’ is also depicted in various

cartoons. For instance, the wedding day of a 'Gulfkaran' is shown to be arranged in a hurry as he could not avail leave to fully attend his own marriage because he has to catch the next flight to the Gulf so as to re-join at his workplace. Toms (2007), 123.

The stardom previously enjoyed by the Malayalees working in North India was snatched by the Gulf migrants from Keralam in the 1970s. At the time of Gulf boom, people began to migrate to the Gulf because now the Gulf migrants received respect from the natives, regardless of the status of their job abroad. The demand for Gulf labourers in the marriage market is portrayed in the cartoon series of early 1970s. The qualification that of a 'Gulfkaran' (a person working in Gulf region) was enough for a man to get a good marriage alliance. Toms (1974), 32. Figure 2.



Figure 2 Toms (1974), 32.

In the cartoon series during the late 1970s, Toms presents the early Gulf migration through the character of Appy Hippie, taking the illegal path of sea journey of seven days instead of waiting for the NOC from Dubai. He is later shown cheated by the people concerned. Toms (1977), 36. Figure 3.



Figure 3 Toms (1977), 36.

The Gulf boom resulted in the growth of consumer culture in Kerala. The margin of income and life style of the fixed income groups and migrant households increased as a result of increasing land price and consequently, construction material costs increased as a result of the remittance from the migrant households. This indirectly resulted in the price hike for daily necessities, thereby causing the lowering of the purchasing capacity of the middle class and below.

7. GULF MIGRATION AND KERALA ECONOMY

Gulf migration helped to lift the economy of Kerala with the overseas income, elevating the poor and lower economic class as, whether legal or illegal, the early migrants were from these sections of the society. This trend of Gulf migration spread across several families where at least one member or relative started working in the Middle East. According to K. C. Zachariah and Sebastian Irudaya Rajan, the proportion of people from different communities who migrated varies, whereby the majority of migrants belonged to Muslim families while the migrants from Hindu families were the least in number. [Zachariah & Irudaya Rajan \(2012\)](#), 6. The number of Muslim men who migrated to the Gulf was greater in the early phase of 1950s, including those migrating illegally through the merchant launches to the Arab regions.

In Aravindan's cartoon series, Ramu climbs up the social ladder only by the end of the cartoon series in 1970s. Meanwhile, Abu, portrayed in the beginning as a young boy running a small tea shop undergoes drastic progress in a period of a decade. When the cartoon series reaches the 1970s, Abu is shown as a Gulf returnee entrepreneur, touring abroad and planning to start an air conditioned cinema theatre and a hotel in the place of his old tea shop. [Aravindan \(1996\)](#), 330. The overseas migrants invested the money in their native place and this resulted in a sudden jump in the economic status of the society in general. He himself brings foreign goods and proudly says that he does 'smuggling' business. As Ramu starts his career and falls prey to the materialistic world, he buys a smuggled watch from Abu, named 'Citizen', which was the turning point in his life. [Aravindan \(1996\)](#), 288. Abu later asks Ramu for his house on rent to keep his smuggling goods [Aravindan \(1996\)](#), 295. The Gulf migrant Abu aids the progress to modernity in the life of Ramu.

Yesudasan's "Mrs. Nair" portrays the settled society of Kerala after the bulk migration associated with the Gulf boom in the 1970s. The strategy of the cartoonist in placing the family of Mrs. Nair as upper class is through the frequent references to their son working abroad. It is evident that the single income from a pensioner does not suffice to maintain the posh status and that the source for this extravaganza is the overseas income. As the cartoon series begins in 1981, Mrs. Nair says that her son is working in Abu Dhabi. [Yesudasan \(1981\)](#), 42. As the cartoon series reaches the second decade, a cartoon shows Mr. and Mrs. Nair planning to visit her son abroad in Doha instead of Abu Dhabi, the two cities being six hundred kilometres away by road. [Yesudasan \(1998\)](#), 82. The parents expect gifts and money from their children living abroad, and often when the 'Gulfkaran' returns, he carries the parcels of his NRI friends over their houses. For instance, the family of such a Non Resident Indian is portrayed in a cartoon. [Yesudasan \(1996\)](#), 94.

The utilisation of Gulf remittance to purchase consumables indicates the emerging trend of consumer culture in the 'Kerala Model', and this consumer culture is evident in the clothing and cuisine. All the cartoonists have portrayed the Gulf money as equal to luxury and it should be inferred that it was a realistic portrayal of Kerala of the time. Instead of investing the money for productive purposes, it is used to facilitate extravagant living in the form of branded costumes and cuisine

from high end restaurants. It could be observed that none of the cartoons portrayed any Gulf money being invested for productive purposes or industries, thus implying that they failed to contribute to the sustainable model of development of the state, which leads one to question the 'Kerala Model' by 2000s. Branded clothing, foreign liquor and cigarettes were the gifts from Gulf migrants during their short visits back home.

The Gulf remittance was the backbone of the economy of Keralam for several decades. Huge amounts of money pumped in as remittance because of the general policy of Gulf countries not allowing citizenship for the overseas migrants. Naturally, the money earned was directly transferred to Keralam which served as the capital for many people to set off as entrepreneurs. Even while they were employed there, the migrants kept the bonds strong by frequently being in touch with their native place mainly because their families were staying in Keralam. This remittance resulted in the economic growth in the dependent sectors like health, education, trade and commerce, communication etc.

The transformation of agrarian economy into a Gulf remittance economy can be visualized in the cartoon series in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The inefficiency of the public Agricultural Office and the unwillingness of the people to do manual agricultural labour are portrayed in the cartoons. Toms (1978), 36. The emergence of super markets replacing the old market setup is the background of the cartoons appearing in the 1970s. Toms (1972), 26.

The growth of any particular large scale business meant the overall development of the locality itself, with more businesses launching in the area. The local shops offering grocery are portrayed as small shops in the background of the cartoon in the early 1960s. Toms (1962), 24. The busy markets of the 1960s are depicted realistically, showing the crowd gathering around for purchasing, because of the availability of everything there. This cartoon consummately depicts the trade patterns of Keralam before the advent of supermarkets. Toms (1966), 24, Figure 4.

Figure 4



Figure 4 Toms (1966), 24

8. PORTRAYAL OF LABOUR AND SHORTAGE OF MANPOWER IN CARTOONS

The aftereffects of Gulf Boom need to be mentioned here, and of these, the main one is the shortage of manpower. As discussed above, the reluctance of Malayalees

to undertake unskilled jobs in their native place opened to them the opportunity of working in the Gulf. This paved the way for migrant labourers from other Indian states like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka to flow into Kerala. The educated unemployed youth in Kerala became a symbol of this reluctance as well as a major shareholder of the growing population of the developing state. Also, the Gulf remittance increased the demand for construction sector which required a greater number of labourers, thus promoting mass migration into Kerala. In his research article, B. A. Prakash says that the money transferred to Kerala from the overseas labourers was spent by their family residing here, mainly for construction purposes. [Prakash \(1998\)](#), 3211.

The influx of money motivated the youth of Kerala as they were not interested in manual labour here. The youngsters of the state were obsessed with the idea of learning a skill to qualify for overseas jobs so that they can migrate to the Gulf region. Money and social status was the highlight for them [Prakash \(1998\)](#). This tendency indirectly affected the life of fixed income groups because the cost of land and construction went beyond their limit and they had to compete with the Gulf money to maintain their living status, resulting in the construction of big houses.

The absence of labourers to do the daily jobs is presented in Toms' cartoon series. According to the cartoonist, the shortage of carpenters and masons in Kerala happened as a result of Gulf migration as these skilled labourers migrated to the Gulf for better salary and their next generation found better options other than their family trades. This trend is portrayed in the cartoon which shows the high demand for carpenters in the construction field. [Toms \(2013\)](#), 36. Similarly, the high demand for and shortage of labourers who used to climb on the coconut trees called 'paravan' (the word is also used for toddy tappers) is depicted in another cartoon, where a man showboats as he alights from an expensive car while the house owner says to the crowding neighbours that he is a 'paravan'. [Toms \(2007\)](#), 12, [Figure 5](#).

Figure 5

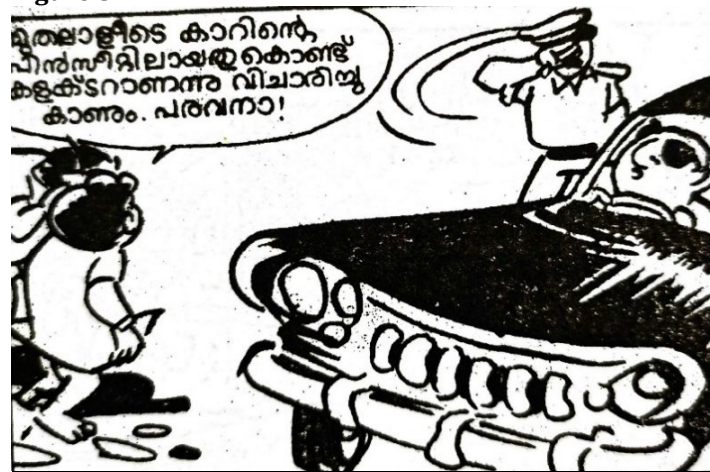


Figure 5 [Toms \(2007\)](#), 12

'Paravan' is a generic name used by Toms to denote the lower section of the society in Kerala. This incident shows the rise in demand and hence the enhancement in the standard of living for the 'paravans' in Kerala during the time.

The shortage of housemaids and their high demand is portrayed in the later cartoons in the cartoon series. [Toms \(2013\)](#), 53. A cartoon portrays housemaids on a huge shortage, whose demands and bargaining power regarding salary are portrayed. [Toms \(2013\)](#), 383. This shortage can be explained in terms of the

changing face of Keralam with regards to literacy and overseas employment. The gradual shift, of the lower class families to the middle class strata owing to the overseas migration and the Gulf boom indirectly resulted in better living conditions for the women folk. The availability of women from the lower economic strata of the society to do the household chores in a well-off family became minimal because of the changed economic condition of the society.

9. CONCLUSION

The high tide of the Gulf boom sank by the end of twentieth century as the indigenization began in the GCC countries to accommodate the natives in different job sectors. The decline in the outflow of labourers was majorly due to the Gulf War, where Malayalees were the most affected, being repatriated from countries like Kuwait. Prakash (1998), 3210. It affected the overseas migration of Malayalees, majority of them being the unskilled and semiskilled job aspirants. In 1988, Oman started this policy of indigenization and several other GCC countries followed suit in the subsequent years. In addition, the remittance from Gulf countries started to depreciate as the educated youth of Keralam began preferring the European countries as a favoured destination by the end of twentieth century.

The difference between overseas migration to the Gulf and that to the Europe is that the remittance came in plenty from the NRIs of Gulf regions because as mentioned previously, the GCC countries did not allow citizenship or property purchase in their places, the income of the NRIs got directly transferred to their native place. The situation is different in the case of European migration as the job aspirants migrated permanently with their families and their income got spent there itself. In the study, "Gulf Migration and the Family", Andrew M. Gardiner observes this as a trait of upper middle-class sector of the society, using the Gulf as a temporary halt for a permanent migration to the other continents of the world, including Europe. Gardner (2011), 18.

Although Gulf migration still happened on a large scale from Keralam, the remittance depreciated in comparison to the previous golden age of the Gulf boom. This also resulted in the return of several overseas migrants. It was difficult for the economy of Keralam to reabsorb the return migrants because they were not ready to work for low wages or as casual workers. Instead, they started units of business or small scale industries based on their expertise, experience and savings acquired from their career overseas. During the 1990s, many of them started small scale businesses like video cassette libraries, restaurants, taxi service, small shops and the like. Keralam was the foremost among Indian states in participating in globalisation post-independence.

The span of five decades transformed Malayalee as a global citizen, thanks to the Gulf boom and large scale migration to the West, changing the socioeconomic picture of Keralam with an upsurge of consumer culture and social status among the people. The Gulf Boom was an important catalyst that aided in the economic and social progress of the state in many respects. This paper utilised the term 'Gulf' instead of the Middle East in many instances because of the popularity of the term in Keralam. In the cartoons after 1970, its effects are illustrated through the depiction of westernisation, luxurious living, consumer culture, shortage of skilled labourers, and empowerment of the emerging middle class through financial stability. The cartoons rightfully represent that the Gulf money was not invested in the productive sector and instead, in building magnificent houses and high end consumerism. The representation of the 'Gulfkaran' (man from the Gulf) as a highly

wanted bridegroom in the marriage market is also a true representation of the time in the cartoons.

In the cartoons, it is shown that the youth of Keralam desperately tried to earn the label 'Gulfkaran' even going to the extent of crossing the border illegally because the label would fetch them social status and greater demand in the marriage market. The progress in the living standards enjoyed by their family members in Keralam may have been the result of their hard work perhaps even in menial jobs, but the fact that there was a 'Gulfkaran' in the family even erased restrictions posed by caste as well. This portrayal shows how the youth of the previous generations viewed the 'Gulf' as a safe haven and a temporary refuge but to return to their native place to get settled as a 'Gulf returnee'. The cartoons also rightfully portray the subsequent effect of migration in disrupting social hierarchy because some workers who were neglected erstwhile started growing in demand due to the shortage of labourers and man power as a result of the outflow of migrants. The changing face of the economy of Keralam from markets to supermarkets as portrayed in the cartoons also stands as testament to the transformative effect of migration in Keralam.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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