CHAPTER V

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Gulf countries have proved to be a boon for many Indians especially Keralities. There are people who have achieved fame and riches with the money they earned from Gulf. Kerala is reckoned for its status of being a state that has achieved 100 per cent literacy. But with few jobs on offer, both in the government sector and the private sector in particular, the number of educated unemployed is increasing. They are left with no choice, but to migrate for better prospects for them and as well as their families. And majority of them prefer migration to the Gulf -- a destination to realize their dreams.

It must be mentioned that people from Kerala have been migrating to the Gulf countries since 1950s. The migration gathered momentum and reached sizeable proportions only after the second half of the 1970s. The number increased in the last few years and is still on the rise. (Department of Economics and Statistics, 2007).

People migrate to the Gulf for many reasons. Better job prospects and attainment of prosperity in life are the prime reasons. Others include setting up a house of their own, having ample savings at the time of retirement, and providing good education to the children. But not all are lucky. Workers in the skilled category and a few in the semi-skilled jobs are entitled to take their families. As is well known, jobs in the Gulf are temporary, be it in the public sector or private establishments. For this reason, some migrants decide or opt to keep their families back home, even if they are allowed to take families
with them, just to reduce the high cost of living in the Gulf and save money for the future.

Migration to the Middle East, the Gulf in particular, has generally contributed to a process of social differentiation in Kerala’s social life. This differentiation has led to a drastic change in the social mobility and status stratification of the lower middle class in the Kerala society. Labour migration to Gulf countries also have resulted in varied outcomes for the individual as well as the society. Migration to the Gulf is an individual solution to overcome monetary problems of the individual which has generally been found to be successful.

The impact of migration is mostly direct and become visible immediately. Lavish lifestyle, huge apartments, modern household amenities and sophisticated electronic wares add to the comforts of the families of the migrants. The family members dress glamorously, mostly clad in jewels and spend a lot in shopping. Children too enjoy enhanced economic security and get into educational institutions paying huge donations. Though the whole situation appears to be fascinating to the outsiders, the changes are mostly structural in nature.

Thus, there is no doubt that migration to Gulf countries has resulted in improved quality of life. But this quality of life seems to be highly peripheral. The impact of migration on the family and the society at large are more negative than positive.

There is not a single town in Kerala which is Gulf-migrant free. Some take up jobs right after they pass out of college, while many others wait till they get married. The former, after saving some money, come back for a
month’s vacation, get married and return to the Gulf. This has caused thousands of married women in Kerala to live away from their husbands. The available statistics claim that one out of every eight married women has her husband working abroad. In this circumstance and in most cases, for a person who cannot take his family to Gulf, marriage may be reduced to two-and-a-half months of joy every two years for the wife. Moreover, a child is denied his father’s love and care and hardly gets to know their father during this period.

Several studies have shown that women, who are left behind, suffer from a series of social and psychological problems induced by separation. Researches and surveys have shown that women in the migrant households have an uphill task and face tensions, pressures, conflicts and anxieties. Problems of loneliness creep in. These wives are exploited by their kin, and are burdened with responsibilities of taking care of the child or children. To top it all, when accusations of infidelity and extra marital relationships arise, misunderstanding by their husbands abroad proves to be a big drawback for these women.

The burden and burn out of these women are doubled when they start thinking of taking up a career of their own and take up jobs. The dual role as a working woman and as a caretaker at home, that too with little support, makes these women depressed and helpless. But not all women are left behind to suffer.

The Gulf countries started witnessing a boom period in the 80’s and 90’s. A good number of men had the privilege of taking their families with them when they migrated. These women were looked up with envy by the wives of expatriate men left behind in Kerala. They always had a strong
feeling that women who accompany their husbands to the Gulf countries were much happier than them. These women perceived that life in the Gulf was very colourful and heavenly. But is it really so? The investigator, who is an expatriate herself, thinks otherwise.

It was felt that the investigation would be incomplete without the inclusion of Arab women. A clear picture emerges across the Arab World when talking about the status of Arab women, as well as their social achievements. Arab society is a collective society in which family and clan relationships play a prominent role. The family, in most cases, provides them with shelter, basic necessities and a relatively secure future, which means that there is little incentive to look for a job or seek other remunerative sources of employment. But the boom period changed it all. At present, equal job opportunities for both genders in many Arab countries, including Qatar, exist.

Qatar, a Muslim nation, gives great importance to women in all aspects. The Arab women enjoy all the privileges of the native country. How women feel in their own country with their husbands and children when compared to women who have migrated to join their husbands in a totally new country is something interesting to be researched.

The aim of the investigator was to find out, through a comparative cross-cultural study, as to who among the three groups -- the wives of expatriate men, the expatriate wives in Qatar or the Arab wives have higher marital adjustment, a stress-free life, a positive self-concept and a better quality of life. The investigator was also interested to find out whether these three groups differ in social support they receive and in the social interaction pattern.
A major impact of migration is felt by the wives of the male migrants. They face disturbed emotional health, economic burden and dual role responsibilities. Research available, to date, are mostly of a sociological nature or an economic analysis of the migrants’ problems. Thus there arises a need to study in depth the psycho social implications of migration for the wives in terms of their emotional health, feeling of loneliness, problems of adjustment, and marital difficulties, to name a few.

A well-documented study regarding these issues is the need of the hour for formulating any future policies or programmes for the Non-Resident Indian (NRI) community as a whole by the government or private sector firms. The study would provide an insight to the government to evaluate the problems of the aforesaid groups. The investigator believes that the findings would help the government to take appropriate measures and bring about changes in the existing rules and regulations.

Although studies highlighting stress and related personality variables of people working in the Gulf and their wives have been looked into, not a single cross-cultural study was found reported. This study thus gains importance as a unique one of its nature.

The study is entitled as:

‘Marital Adjustment and its Psychosocial Correlates – A Cross-Cultural Study of Women in Kerala and in Qatar’.

Objectives

1. To find out whether the wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriates wives in Qatar and the Arab wives differ in marital adjustment, stress,
self-concept, quality of life, social interaction pattern and social support.

2. To find out whether the wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriates wives in Qatar and the Arab wives differ in marital adjustment, stress, self-concept, quality of life, social interaction pattern and social support with respect to selected socio-demographic variables. (Age, Employment Status, Type of Family, Years of married life, Parental Status, Nature of Job and the Type of Job.)

3. To find out the relationship between the marital adjustment and the selected psycho social correlates (Stress, Self-Concept, Quality Of Life, Social Interaction Pattern and Social Support) of the wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriates wives in Qatar and the Arab wives.

4. To find out the relationship between marital adjustment and selected socio demographic variables (age and years of married life) of wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and the Arabs wives.

Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in marital adjustment.

2. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in stress.
3. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in self-concept.

4. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in quality of life.

5. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in social interaction pattern.

6. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in social support.

7. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in marital adjustment with respect to selected socio-demographic variables. (Age, Employment Status, Type of Family, Years of married life, Parental Status, Nature of Job and Type of Job)

8. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in stress with respect to socio-demographic variables.

9. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives Qatar and Arab wives in self-concept with respect to socio-demographic variables.
10. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in quality of life with respect to socio-demographic variables.

11. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in social interaction pattern with respect to socio-demographic variables.

12. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in social support with respect to socio-demographic variables.

13. There will be no significant relationship between marital adjustment and stress of wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives.

14. There will be no significant relationship between marital adjustment and self-concept of wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives.

15. There will be no significant relationship between marital adjustment and quality of life of wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and the Arab wives.

16. There will be no significant relationship between marital adjustment and social interaction pattern of wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives.

17. There will be no significant relationship between marital adjustment and social support of wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives.
18. There will be no significant relationship between marital adjustment and selected socio-demographic variables of wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives. (Age and Years of Married Life)

Method

Sample

A total of 740 married women ranged in age from 19 to 55 years, with a mean age of 33.92 (SD=8.35) were selected for the study. Among 740 subjects, 300 (40.5%) were wives in Kerala of expatriate men, 200 (27.2%) were expatriate wives in Qatar and 240 (32.3%) were Arab wives. 522 subjects (70.5%) were in the age range of 19 to 40 years and 218 were above 40 years of age (29.5%).

With regard to type of family, the majority of the sample which is 68.5% belonged to nuclear family and 31.5% were from joint families. As regard to the variable years of married life, 499 subjects were with above 5 years of married life (67.4%), 150 subjects with 2 to 5 years (20.3%) and 91 subjects were with below 2 years of marriage (12.3%). Among the subjects 89.2% were parents and the rest 10.8% were without children.

In the total sample, 50.3% were working and 49.7% were not working. 65.5% of the subjects were employed in non-professional jobs, where as 27.4% were in professional jobs and 7.1% were in technical jobs. 70.9% of the subjects were working in private sector which and 29.1% were in public sector.
Tools Used

The following tools were used for the present study.

1. Marital Adjustment Inventory (Singh, R.H, 1987)
2. Harichandran’s Stress Inventory (Hari S Chandran, 1994)
3. The Self-Concept Inventory (M.S. Razeena Padmam 1985)
4. Quality of Life (Jameela K Warrier, & Sam Sananda Raj, 1999)
6. Social Support Scale (Procidino and Heller, 1983)
7. Personal data sheet (prepared by the investigator)

Statistical Analyses

One way Anova was used to find out the differences among the three groups of wives in Marital Adjustment, Stress, Self-Concept, Quality of Life, Social Interaction Pattern and Social Support.

Two way Anova was computed to find out the differences among the three groups of wives in Marital Adjustment, Stress, Self-Concept, Quality of Life, Social Interaction Pattern and Social Support with respect to socio demographic variables.

Sheffe test was conducted to find out the pair wise differences following Anova.

Product Moment Correlations were done to find out the relationship between Marital Adjustment and the five psycho social correlates.
Product moment correlations were done to find out the relationship between Marital Adjustment and the selected socio demographic variables.

Findings of the Study

1. Wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives do not differ in marital adjustment.

2. Wives in Kerala of expatriate men have the highest stress and Arab wives have the lowest stress. Expatriate wives in Qatar and wives in Kerala of expatriate men do not differ in stress.

3. Arab wives have the highest self-concept and wives in Kerala of expatriate men have the lowest self-concept. There is no difference between wives in Kerala of expatriate men and expatriate wives in Qatar in self-concept.

4. Expatriate wives in Qatar have the highest quality of life and wives in Kerala have the lowest quality of life. There is no difference between Arab wives and wives in Kerala and between Arab wives and expatriate wives in Qatar in quality of life.

5. Wives in Kerala have the highest social interaction pattern and Arab wives have the lowest. There is no difference between wives in Kerala and expatriate wives in Qatar in social interaction pattern.

6. Wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives do not differ in social support.

7. Working wives have better marital adjustment than non-working wives. Working Arab wives have the highest marital adjustment and working wives in Kerala have the lowest marital adjustment. Non-
working Arab wives have the highest marital adjustment and non-working expatriate wives in Qatar have the lowest marital adjustment.

8. Wives working in public sector have better marital adjustment than wives working in private sector. Arab wives working in public sector have the highest marital adjustment and expatriate wives in Qatar working in public sector have the lowest marital adjustment. Expatriate wives in Qatar working in private sector have the highest marital adjustment and wives in Kerala working in private sector have the lowest marital adjustment.

9. Wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives do not differ in marital adjustment with respect to their age, type of family, years of married life, parental status and type of job.

10. Wives aged above 40 experience more stress than wives aged between 19 to 40. Wives in Kerala aged above 40 have the highest stress while Arab wives who are aged above 40 have the lowest stress. Wives in Kerala aged 19 to 40 have the highest stress while Arab wives aged between 19 to 40 have the lowest stress.

11. Working wives have higher stress than non-working wives. Working wives in Kerala of expatriate men have the highest stress while Arab working wives have the lowest stress. Non-working wives in Kerala have the highest stress and non-working Arab wives have the lowest stress.

12. Wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives do not differ in stress with respect to their type of family, years of married life, parental status, nature of job and type of job.
13. Non-working wives have high self-concept than the working wives. Non-working Arab wives have the highest self-concept while non-working wives in Kerala have the lowest self-concept. Working Arab wives have the highest self-concept and working expatriate wives in Qatar have the lowest self-concept.

14. Wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives do not differ in self-concept with respect to age, type of family, years of married life, parental status, nature of job and type of job.

15. Wives aged between 19 to 40 have better quality of life than wives aged above 40. Expatriate wives in Qatar aged between 19 to 40 have the highest quality of life and wives in Kerala of expatriate men aged 19 to 40 have the lowest quality of life. Expatriate wives in Qatar of age above 40 have the highest quality of life and Arab wives of age above 40 have the lowest quality of life.

16. Wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives do not differ in quality of life with respect to their type of family, years of married life, parental status, employment status, nature of job and type of job.

17. Wives who are married for more than 5 years have more social interaction pattern than wives who are married for 2 to 5 years. There is no difference in social interaction pattern between wives who are married for less than 2 years and those married for more than 5 years. Expatriate wives in Qatar who are married for more than 5 years have the highest social interaction pattern and the lowest social interaction pattern is for Arab wives with the same duration of marriage. Wives in
Kerala who are married for 2 to 5 years get the highest social interaction pattern and Arab wives who are married for 2 to 5 years get the lowest. Wives in Kerala with marriage duration of below 2 years have the highest social interaction pattern and wives in Qatar with the same duration of marriage have the lowest social interaction pattern.

18. Working wives have the higher social interaction pattern than non-working wives. Expatriate working wives in Qatar have the highest social interaction pattern and Arab working wives have the lowest social interaction pattern. Non-working wives in Kerala have the highest social interaction pattern and non-working Arab wives have the lowest.

19. Wives who are professionals and non-professionals have the highest social interaction pattern than technicians. Expatriate working wives who are professionals have the highest social interaction pattern and Arab wives working as professionals have the lowest social interaction pattern. Non-professional working wives in Kerala have the highest social interaction pattern and non-professional Arab working wives have the lowest social interaction pattern. Expatriate wives in Qatar working as technicians have the highest social interaction and Arab wives working as technicians have the lowest.

20. Wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives do not differ in social interaction pattern in relation to their age, type of family, parental status and nature of job.

21. Professionals have more social support than non-professionals. Arab working wives who are professionals have the highest social support and the expatriate wives in Qatar who are professionals have the
lowest social support. Wives in Kerala working as non-professionals have the highest social support and expatriate wives in Qatar working as non-professionals have the lowest. Expatriate wives working as technicians gets the highest social support and Arab wives working as technicians get the lowest.

22. The wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives do not differ in social support in relation to their age, type of family, years of married life, parental status, employment status and nature of job.

23. Marital adjustment has a negative relationship with Stress for expatriate wives in Qatar. As stress increases marital adjustment decreases and vice-versa. There is no relationship between these two variables for wives in Kerala of expatriate men and Arab wives.

24. There is no relationship between marital adjustment and self-concept for expatriate wives in Qatar, wives in Kerala of expatriate men and Arab wives.

25. Marital adjustment has positive relationship with quality of life for expatriate wives in Qatar and wives in Kerala of expatriate men. Marital adjustment will increase as quality of life increases for expatriate wives in Qatar and wives in Kerala of expatriate men. There is no relationship between these two variables for Arab wives.

26. Marital adjustment and social interaction pattern are positively related for expatriate wives in Qatar. Marital adjustment will be more as social interaction pattern increases for expatriate wives in Qatar. There is no
relationship between these two variables for wives in Kerala of expatriate men and Arab wives.

27. Marital adjustment has a positive relationship with social support for expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives. Marital adjustment will be more as social support increases for expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives. There is no relationship between these two variables for wives in Kerala of expatriate men.

28. Marital Adjustment and years of married life are positively related for Arab wives. As years of married life increases marital adjustment increases for Arab wives. There is no relationship between these two variables for wives in Kerala of expatriate men and expatriate wives in Qatar.

29. There is no relationship between marital adjustment and age for expatriate wives in Qatar and wives in Kerala of expatriate men and Arab wives.

Implications

- The findings of the study can be used to widen the existing research base in the area of migration.

- This study opens a new channel for further research on the problems created by occupational separation of couples in matters relating to marriage, family and society.

- The findings that the wives of expatriate men have the highest stress and the lowest self-concept will give the society and the family members an insight to explore the effects of various familial and socio-cultural factors in the lives of wives of expatriate men.
• These findings are suggestive of implementing schemes for families and other welfare activities for NRI wives which would create a sense of security for these women who are left behind to fight the burdens all by themselves.

• Awareness to the family members should be given by social organizations regarding the various issues faced by the women of expatriate men. These wives should be closely involved in planning the family’s financial future and thereby secure financial freedom. Job responsibilities should be equally shared within the family members.

• The government can organize and promote self-help groups so that their emotional problems can be shared and channelized.

• The attitudes of society towards the occupationally separated wives are not encouraging. They should be supported to withstand the stress.

• The government should initiate necessary steps for protecting wives of expatriate men against various abuses and harassments.

• Private firms lack job security, end of service schemes benefits and contributory pension schemes in contrary to the government jobs. Hence adequate measures should be taken by the private firms to include these schemes and benefits for their employees.

• The findings also may help the government and policy makers to devise mechanisms by which the stress of wives can be alleviated. Schemes can be worked out in such a way that women in Kerala improve their quality of life and thereby their self-concept.
Scope for Further Research

Following suggestions are given by the investigator for further research based on the findings of the study.

1. A study with larger sample including women from various sectors of population can be done.

2. A study can be conducted to assess the impact of occupational separation on the marital adjustment of the wives.

3. The present study was conducted to find out the difference between groups of wives in marital adjustment and psycho social correlates. The study can be replicated taking men as the sample.

4. A study can be done to assess the impact of occupational separation of parents on children.

5. The findings of the present study reveal that wives of expatriate man have the highest stress and lowest self-concept. An attempt can therefore be made to find out the emotional and psychosomatic problems of wives living separated from their husbands.

6. A detailed study on the various factors that contribute to marital adjustment, stress, self-concept, quality of life, social interaction pattern, and social support of wives in Kerala of expatriate men can be conducted.

7. A comparative study on stress among wives in Kerala and their migrated spouse can be undertaken, which would throw light on the stress of the expatriate men living away from their families.
8. The relationship between personality type and marital adjustment of wives in Kerala of expatriate men, the expatriate wives in Gulf and Arab wives can be explored.

9. Follow up studies can be done to find out the role of social support on marital adjustment. Similar studies can be done for self-concept, quality of life and social interaction pattern too.

**Limitations of the study**

1. The sample is limited to only four districts in Kerala.

2. The sample of Arab population was not uniform as the sample included not only Qatari but also other nationalities from Palestine, Egypt, Sudan, Bahrain, Lebanon and United Arab Emirates.

3. The sample size is comparatively small to represent relevant socio-demographic characteristics of the groups studied. Certain socio-demographic variables were not proportionate enough to do a statistical analysis.

4. The sample taken from Arab wives in Qatar included only Muslims. But Kerala wives had representatives from all the three religious groups.