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Topic of Research: Social Support Networks among Indian Migrants in GCC Countries: A Sociological Study of migrants in U.A.E.

Findings

The Indian Migrants in the UAE form the largest expatriate community in UAE. UAE is the favourite destination for migrants across the world. The large presence of Indian migrants helps form robust social support networks. India is a diverse country, so there are many kinds of formal or informal organizations that provide social support to migrants. The support system helps navigate the challenges in the UAE. The migrants' networks are obvious to grow in their structure and function if they are in large numbers and sustained for a long time. The objective of the present study is to understand the complex inter-relationships among migrants in the host country. This study focuses on the structure and function of the social support networks among migrants from India in GCC countries. This contributes to the theoretical understanding of migration and Social Support from sociological perspectives and the nature of the physical and emotional support system among migrants.

Indian migrants in the United Arab Emirates are thought to rely heavily on social support for their general well-being and adjustment to living in a foreign country. Indian immigrants in the UAE frequently establish social support networks to aid in overcoming the difficulties of relocating abroad and finding employment. These networks provide emotional support, practical assistance, and a sense of community. Here are some aspects of social support networks among Indian migrants in the UAE Such as Community and Cultural associations, social circles, and Social Media Platforms in the forms of Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp etc. Other social support systems such as community and help centers, and Youth groups are also emerging as vital players. For Indian migrants in the UAE, social support also plays an important role in other aspects such as mental and health issues, communication Workplace Support etc. For the study, the primary data have been collected from various government records, reports, and official websites of international organizations like the UNO and social organizations in the UAE. The secondary data have been gathered from a review of available pieces of literature such as books, articles published in various national and international journals, newspapers, and magazines and related websites.

For social and cultural activities, there are many organizations of Indians in UAE. These organizations are found to be more likely to be established or organized in line with the diverse cultural and linguistic ethos of India. For example, India's Islamic Centre is based on cultural or religious ethos, and Abu Dhabi Malayalee Samajam is based in line with the language and culture. There are the Indian Ladies Association, and Kerala Social Centre among other formal organizations . All these organizations are to provide some kind of support system or the other. These organizations help develop certain kinds of networks that become instrumental support systems as and when required. Hence, apart from informal or direct social support networks that are more reliable for individual or family kind or confidential kind of support. Whereas, at the larger activities and involvement, there is much formal support from the formal organizations too. Hence, Social Support Networks are found to be informal as well as formal. Informal networks are more reliable in the personal or confidential kinds of support. Whereas, formal are there to

help migrants to accommodate in larger socio and cultural settings. A member of any formal group or organization may be a member of other organizations too. For example, a Muslim woman from Kerala can be a member of Abu Dhabi Malayalee Samajam, and (or) India Islamic Centre, and (or) Indian Ladies Association. It is found that the membership is not exclusive to any organization. That supports the second hypothesis that states the membership of social support networks is fluid.

These days, there are second and third-generation Indian migrants living in Gulf countries who are unable to get citizenship or permanent residency rights because of the policies of the host country. However, largely second and third-generation migrants are getting relatively better economic and social benefits vis a vis first generation migrants are concerned. The first-generation migrants also tried to look for any connectivity in the country where they were planning to migrate. If they find any, they try to get information even before landing in that host country. This information and the connectivity in the alien country do not remain so alien for the migrants and this makes the migration smoother. From finding a job to accommodation to social integration, all these things are made easier for the migrants because of the support networks. This suggests that Social Support Networks affect migration positively.

The social support to the migrants is provided mainly within their network. These networks provide a sense of satisfaction of being in a familiar relationship very close to what they could have found in their home country. This self-confidence in the migrants helps to maintain their mental health. This helps to keep them healthy and help them to cope with any stressful situation. Thus, Social Support Networks are fruitful in the overall social and psychological aspects of migrants.

In different cultural settings, migrants face emotional challenges, especially those who have homesickness, a very good social life in their home country, isolation in the host country, and due to differences in the culture. These challenges are more conspicuous if the migrants are unskilled or semi-skilled. The emotional stress are eased by the social support networks for it provides a sense of belongingness and cultural familiarity with their home culture away from their home country. Common cultural background plays a role in providing a sense of solidarity among the Indian migrants. Religious institutions and religious communities among other organizations or groups give a sense of identity to the migrants belonging to a particular religion.