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Gulf Remittances and Economic & Educational Status of Migrated Muslim Households in Malappuram District, Kerala

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Abstract: ***The present study was under taken to examine the impact of remittances on educational and economic status of Muslim Households in Malappuram District, the northern region of Kerala. Primary data were collected from three town areas in the same district such as Nilambur, Areekode and Manjeri, which has highest concentration of emigrant population. The effect was verified in the light of data on level of education, occupational status and monthly income of Muslim migrant households in Nilambur Muncipality. The search for a better life and job opportunities outside the nation continues to be the primary reason for migratory movements in the world. The International Organization for Migration conceptualizes migration as "The movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State.***
Keywords: Gulf remittance, Migration, percapita income

I. INTRODUCTION

There are not many studies about the impact of emigration and gulf remittances on the education of the children of emigrant households. However, here, we have made an attempt to review some of the studies about the impact of migration on economic and educational status.

Researchers differ in their opinion about the impact of remittances on education which may be partly due to differences in the period of study, differences in the characteristic features of the region from where data were collected and method of analysis etc. As already stated, although we have a large number of studies about the impact of emigration on Kerala economy in general, specific studies about the impact of remittances on education in Kerala is very much limited.

Hence, some of the important studies about the impact of emigration and foreign remittances on education and economic status carried out in Kerala have been listed here.

The oil boom and the consequent rise in the demand for workers in the Gulf countries opened a new phase in the emigration process in Kerala. Increasing numbers of Keralites began to migrate to the Gulf countries from early 1970s and this has brought a substantial amount by way of inward remittances to the state, particularly in to the homes of emigrants and most of them were from poor families.

There are evidences that during the 1970s and 1980s, migrants were poor unskilled workers. The receipt of considerable amounts in the backward and conservative houses of the Muslims in Malappuram, Trichur, Kozhikode and Cannanore districts and the exposure they got from outside the country have brought enormous changes in their attitude towards their life style, religious practice and in education. There are a few studies about the impact of migration on the educational performance of the family members of the migrants in Kerala

Even though the factors behind the educational backwardness of Muslims in India and Kerala and Malappuram in particular are common, Muslims in Kerala have specific reasons for their educational backwardness. Various reasons have been identified for the educational backwardness of Muslim community in Kerala and the following are some reviews. The Portuguese domination during the 17th century and the British rule during the 19th to 20th century had adversely affected the plight of Kerala Muslims. There were rivalry and suspicion between the Muslims and the European powers during that period which created an aversion to the Kerala Muslims against modern education.

Here, we will review some of the available studies which examined the reasons behind the educational and economic backwardness of Kerala.

(*This study is an extracts from my Ph.D (pursuing) Topic: Gulf remittances and behavioural traits of migrated Muslim households in Malappuram District, Kerala , Jamal Mohammed College, Tamilnadu*

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A. A Brief Profile of Malappuram District

I choose the major areas such as Nilambur, Manjeri and Areekode in Malappuram district as my area of study as this district is considered as a representative district for Muslim community. The proportion of Muslims to the total population of this district is 70.24 percent. Moreover, this district has the largest concentration of Muslim emigrants from Kerala to the Gulf regions and about one-third of the households of this district are direct beneficiaries of foreign remittances. Hence, this district is the most appropriate district for a micro level study to analyze the impact of emigration on economic and educational changes of the Muslim community in Kerala.

Malappuram literally means the land atop the hills and this district was formed on 16th June 1969. The district is bounded by the Nil Gris of Tamil Nadu in the east,

Arabian Sea in the west, Kozhikode and Wynad district in the North and Palakkad and

Thrissur districts in the South. It has a geographical area of 3,350 square kms which comes to 9.13 percent of the total area of the state.

The headquarters of the district is at Malappuram. The district has two revenue divisions and seven Taluks. There are 100 grama panchayaths; 15 block panchayaths and seven Muncipalities in the District. It has two parliamentary constituencies and 16 assembly constituencies. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood of the people of Malappuram district as about 75 percent of the population directly or indirectly depends on agriculture in this district. There are about 2.08 lakh hectares of land available for cultivation in this district. The main crops grown are paddy, coconut, tapioca, arecanut, cashew nut banana, rubber, pulses, ginger, pepper and betel vine. The district has 70 Kms of sea coast stretching from Kadalundi Nagaram in the north to Palappetty in the South. Ponnani is the major fishing port of this district.

The district Gross Domestic Product value added at constant price is 6983367whereas the district per capita income is Rs.154463, which is reported as the lowest among the 14 districts of Kerala. The religion-wise distribution of the population in Malappuram district shows that Hindus constitute 27.60 percent, Muslims 70.24 percent and Christians constitute 1.98 percent (Census, 2011). As such, religion wise, Malappuram district is dominated by Muslims. The rate of child marriage (35.7 percent) and crude birth rate (27.92 percent) of this district is very high.

The summary picture of the key geographical and socio- economic characteristics

Of the people of this district is presented in the following table

Table 1: Geographical and Socio- Economic Variables of Malappuram District

Area (in sq km)	3550
Population	41,10,956
Sex ratio Females/ 1000 males	1096
Density of population	1158
Literacy Rate	94
Male literacy	96
Female literacy	92
Work participation rate	26
Male work participation Rate	46
Female work participation Rate	8
Unemployment Rate	12.5
Gross District value added at constant prices	3783386 (in lakhs)
Percapita Income	154463

Source: Economic Review, 2011 and Census, 2011

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II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

A. Examine the educational level of Muslim migrant households in Malappuram district
B. To evaluate monthly income of the migrant Muslim Households in Malappuram district
C. To assess the occupational status of Muslim migrants

III. METHODOLOGY

To satisfy the objectives of the study, primary data was collected from the migrant Muslim households by the investigator through interview and the available secondary data also used for the completion of this study. The primary data collected from 250 Muslin migrant households from three areas such as Nilambur, Areekode and Manjeri in Malappuram district on January 2020

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATUR

Mathew and Nair (1978) evaluated the socio-economic characteristics of emigrants and their family and they found a positive correlation between emigration and development of educational infrastructure in the migration centres. Emigration led to the emergence and growth of technical and vocational training institutions in various trades like construction related courses, motor and machine operations, welding, tailoring etc

Rawther (1978) in his study examined the socio- educational problems and the level of aspirations of Muslim students in Kerala. The study was based on the data collected from the coastal areas of Ponnani taluk of Malappuram district. He found economic backwardness as the most important reason behind the educational backwardness of Muslim students. Poor economic condition forced the children to assist their parents in work which compelled the students to discontinue their studies even in the initial stages of their studies.

Menon (1981) analysed the various sociological reasons for the educational backwardness of Muslim community in Kerala. He opined that social evils like polygamy, divorce, seclusion of women etc. were the factors which inhibited the educational progress of Muslim community in Kerala. The study observed that, in spite of the government encouragement in the form of fee concessions and grants, the number of Muslim girls attending vernacular schools were very small in Kerala. Hence, the study observed that the increased educational facilities could not increase the number of literate Muslim women in Kerala owing to the opposition from the family

Nair (1983) tried to evaluate the impact of Gulf migration along with the causes of emigration. He also examined the socio-economic changes and characteristics of migrants, and the utilization of foreign remittances. According to the study, the pull and push factors compelled the socially and economically backward Keralites to migrate to the Gulf regions. Further the study found that the remittances were the major source of income to the emigrant household and more than 50 percent of the income received from abroad was spent for consumption purposes.

Kareem (1989) in his study examined the development implications of educational backwardness of Muslims. He found that Muslims are socially, educationally and politically backward and this is due to the high incidence of poverty, illiteracy, low income and irregular employment. He also found that Muslims were late to enter social transition and their educational backwardness has a negative effect on their socioeconomic standards in terms of asset ownership, employment structure, assistance received from financial agencies etc. Thus the study found Muslims are caught in a vicious circle of low economic status that leads to educational backwardness, which in turn prevents Muslims from reaching higher employment categories.

Anand (2002) studied the plight of Muslim women in Chungathara Panchayath near nilambur in Malappuram District. The study found unique features among Muslim women in this area such as low educational attainment, high level of ignorance, cases of early marriage, and motherhood; lack of social mobility etc. However, it found progress in the field of education in this area and concluded that this is due to the influence of Gulf migration. Having reviewed the major studies about the impact of emigration on Kerala economy, we may briefly summarise the major characteristics of Malappuram district on the basis of secondary data.

V. ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

In this area we examine the gulf remittance, educational level of Muslim migrants,and occupational status of the same category in Malappuram district, Kerala . Before explaining the monthly income, level of education and occupational status of muslim migrants in the selected regions, we have to discuss the influence of household migration and its remittances in Malappuram district,Kerala at a glance. The major source of the income is the remittances of migrants from foreign countries. Unemployment is the main reason for increasing migration

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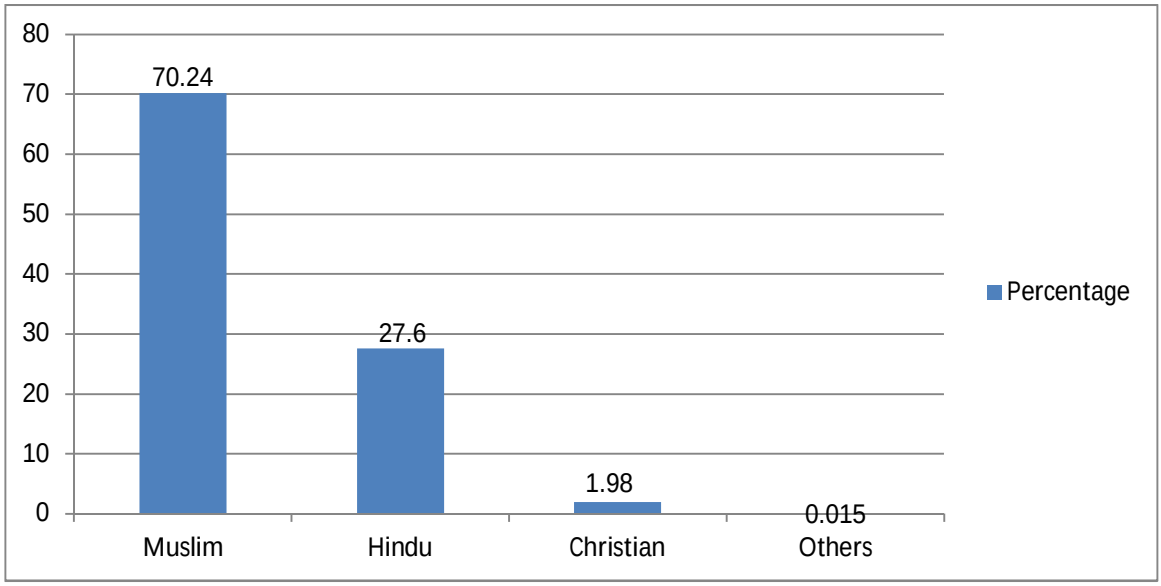
Table 2: Community wise Distribution of Population in Malappuram District

Description	Total	Percentage
Muslim	2,888,849	70.24
Hindu	1135259	27.60
Christian	81,556	1.98
Sikh	205	0.00
Buddhist	179	0.00
Jain	68	0.00
Others	579	0.01
Not Stated	6225	0.15

Source: Census 2011

Figure1: Community wise Distribution of Population in Malappuram District



A. Household Remittances in Malappuram District

As in earlier surveys, the largest amount of remittances was received by Malappuram districts amounting to Rs. 6326 crores. This is 20.6 per cent of the state total, and has an 80 per cent increase compared to Kerala Migration Survey 2013. The other districts that received large amounts of remittances were Kollam (4602 crores), Thrissur (3350 crores), Thiruvananthapuram (2904 crores) and Kozhikode (2662 crores). Kollam district has the highest increase in remittances during 2013-2018 and Ernakulam has the highest decrease. Overall, Kerala has 26 per cent increase between 2013 and 2018.

The remittance to Kerala is increasing over the years, but not all the households in Kerala are receiving the same directly. In reality, only 16 per cent of the households in Kerala get remittances from abroad. About 34 per cent of households in Malappuram district received remittances for the last 12 months prior to the survey, followed by Kollam
(22.9 per cent)

Table 3: Household Remittances in Malappuram District, (in Crores)

	2018	2013	Percent Increase	% of Household received remittance in 2018
Malappuram	6326	3510	80.2	34
Kerala	30717	24374	26.0	16.3

Source: Kerala Economic Review 2019 and Kerala migration survey 2018

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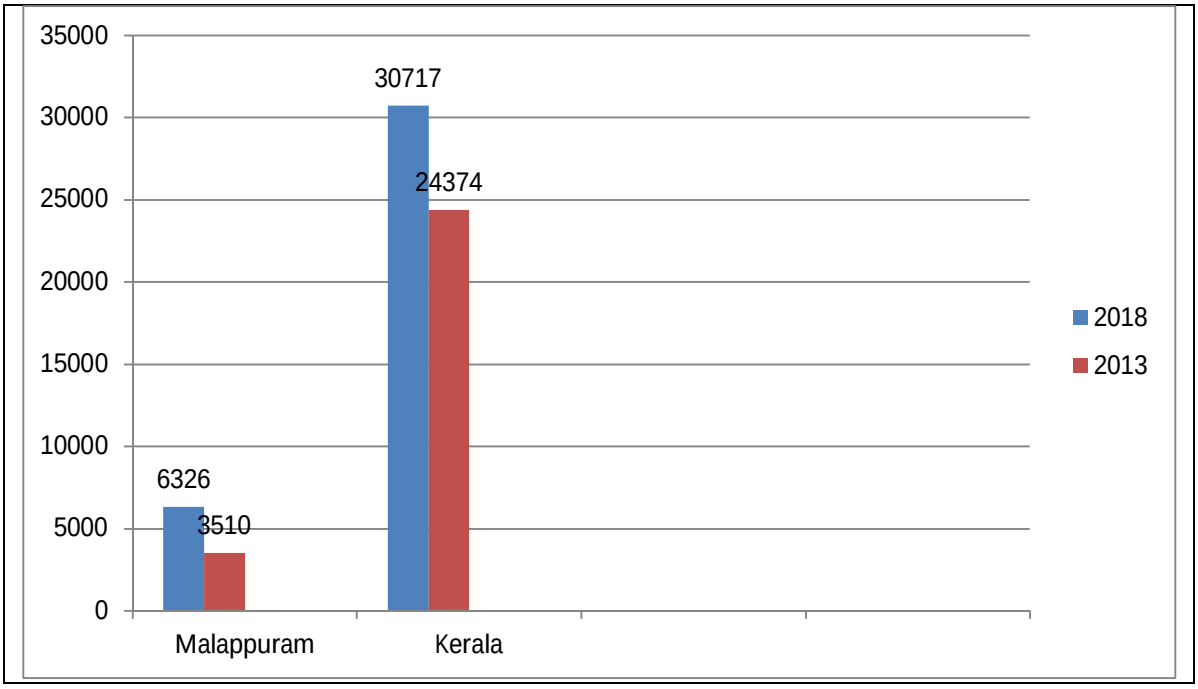
Figure 2: Household Remittances in Malappuram District (in Crores)



Source: Kerala Migration Survey 2018

This district sends a major part of the total migrants from Kerala to the Gulf region and the migration status of this district has certain special features. There are studies (Zachariah and Rajan, 2012) which perceived that migration to the Gulf region has made tremendous changes in the Malappuram district as it is the largest recipient of foreign remittances in Kerala. Hence, I have choosed this district for examining the impact of emigration on the educational and economic attainments of the socially and economically backward Muslim community.

B. Household Remittance by Religion

Between 2013 and 2018, household remittances have a considerable increase among all religions, especially among Muslims an increase of 33 per cent was seen, and among Hindus it was 31 per cent. Definitely, the largest amount was received by the Muslim community, 42.4 percent. The Hindu community comes next with 37.2 per cent, and Christians come last with 20.4 percent.

C. Monthly income of the Muslim Migrants

An estimate of remittances received by households sent by emigrants for household day-to-day expenditure was obtained by asking the following questions to the head of the sample households. "Did anyone in your family receive money or goods or gifts other than cash from persons residing abroad during the last 12-month period?"

The answers have four components

1) Cash Remittance (in Rs.)
2) Total Money value of goods received as gifts (in Rs.)
3) Special remittance to buy house/ land/ car (in Rs.)
4) Total money value of special remittances not included above (in Rs.)

The total remittances received by the migrant households through various forms mentioned above are given in the table 4.

The reason for the emigration is to earn more income than in domestic countries by using the opportunities available in the foreign countries. The high oil price contribution in their Gross Domestic Product provides better employment opportunity in the Gulf countries to a large section of Kerala population.

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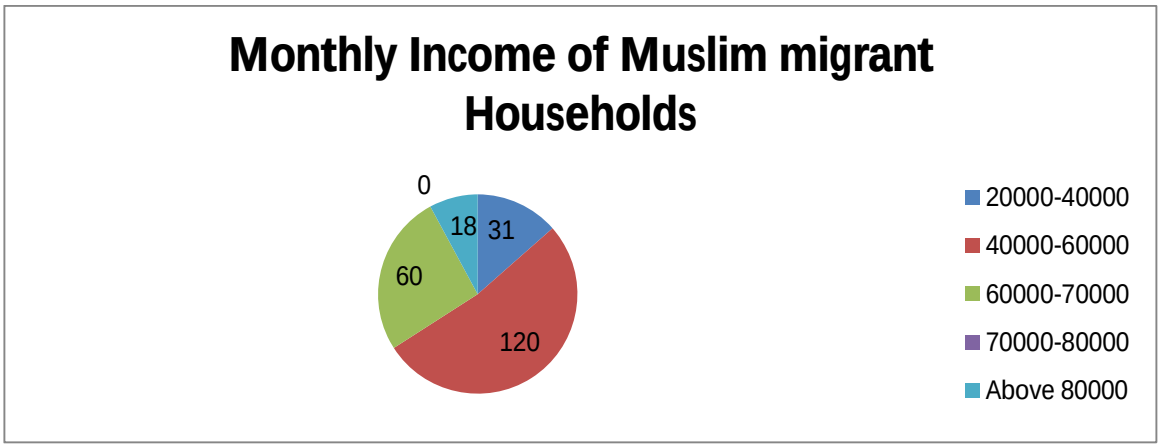
Table 4: Monthly income of the Migrant Muslim Households

SL No	Income (in Thousands)	Number of Migrants	Percentage
1	20000-40000	31	12.4
2	40000-60000	120	48
3	60000-70000	60	24
4	70000-80000	21	8.4
7	Above 80000	18	7.2
	Total	250	100

Source : Field survey

Figure 3: Monthly Income of the migrant Households



D. Occupational Status in Gulf

The occupational status of the Muslim migrants in the sample data (Table 4) reflects the nature of jobs, in which they were engaged in the Gulf countries. Here, the demand for labour was mainly in construction sector. In fact, the number of Mappila Migrants in the construction sector is relatively low. Most of the Mappila Muslims, historically, were mainly engaged in the small type of trade and business and agricultural related occupations prior to their emigration to the Gulf. Although the new generation of Mappila Muslim migrants has been engaged in some form of official work in the Gulf, a good number of the Mappila Muslim emigrants continue their business related work even in the Gulf region. If one examines the sample survey data, it is clear that a majority of the Mappila Muslim migrants were engaged in business and related occupations, such as shop keepers, Salesmen, Hotel cooks, Drivers and so on. Most of them simultaneously worked and managed Cafeterias, Fruit shops, Textile shops, Supermarkets etc

Table 5: Occupational Status of Muslims Migrants in Sample Area

Occupation	Number of migrants	Percentage
Hotel	36	14.4
Driver	58	23.2
Saleaman	65	26
Shope keeper	27	10.8
House keeper	25	10
Business	25	10
Others	14	5.6
Total	250	100

Source: Field Survey

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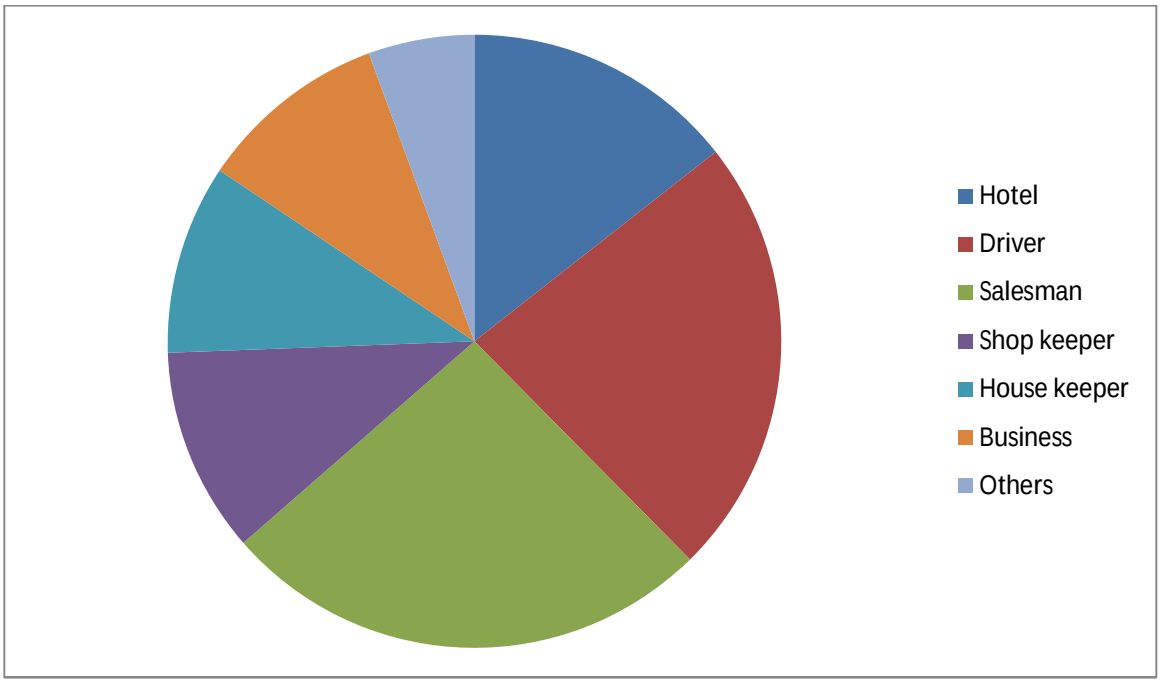
Figure 4: Occupational status of Muslim Migrants



Here it is observed that there is a link between the work status of Mappila Muslim migrants in the Gulf countries and their socio-economic background prior to their first migration. As per the work status data given in the table, the majority of the emigrants work in business related sector in the Gulf .As given in the table, 65 percentage of the migrants works as sales man in the gulf followed by diver 58 percentage, hotel job 36 percentage .The representation of shop keeper, House keeper are 27 and 25 percentages respectively. Shop keepers and House keepers are relatively less than 30 percentage of the sample which shows their status in more standard jobs than earlier

E. Educational Qualification of the Emigrants

It was generally believed that the educational levels of the Kerala emigrants have improved considerably in recent years. But the present study does not support such a significant shift. The data show that there has not taken place any major shift in the educational attainments of the emigrants from Malappuram District, Kerala. The largest number of emigrants have always been from among those with the primary level of education .35.6 percent of migrants having only primary education, 34 percent have higher secondary education. Only 4.8 percent of Muslim migrants are graduates. Thus improvement in educational attainment of migrants have been relatively marginal compared to few years back

Table 6: Educational Level of Migrants

Educational level	No. Of Migrants	Percentage
Primary education	89	35.6
Secondary Education	51	20.4
Higher secondary	85	34
Degree and Above	12	4.8
Others	9	3.6
Illiterate	4	1.6
Total	250	100

Source: Field survey

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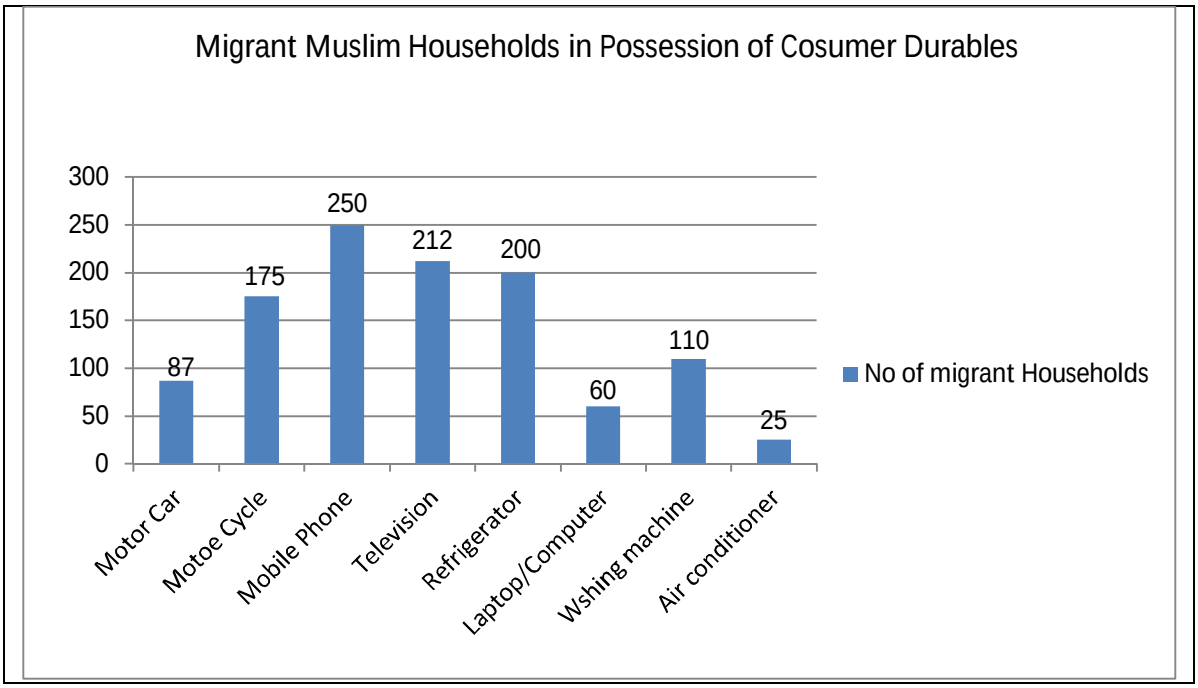
F. Possession of Consumer Durables

The Muslim NRK,s(Non-resident Keralites) possess more consumer durables as revealed both in the given Kerala migration survey data and in the field survey data collected by the investigator himself. All the products ownership is inclined to the migrant households. The ownership of private vehicles (car & motor cycle) had grown rapidly in this period.

Figure 5: Percentage of Muslim migrant Households in Possession of ConsumerDurables (Out of 250 Households)



Source: Field survey

During the field survey, the investigator could understand that almost all migrant households have possessed Mobile phones(100%), majority of the households (85%) possess television followed by Refrigerator (80.8 %), Motor Cycle (70.%) and so on. Notably, Motor car and Washing machine etc are also covered in their choice of preference. Despite the increasing possession trend, products like Mobile Phone, Television, Washing machine, Motor car & Computer/Laptop are showing an increasing tendency in possession. In conclusion, we can say that through migration, remittances is giving more purchasing power to the people

VI. CONCLUSION

The present study looked into the impact that remittances have exerted in nurturing and shaping the educational status of the migrant's children and over all consumerism in Malappuram district, a district in the Malabar region of Kerala. The findings on the consumption practices, stock of durables and purchasing behaviour of migrant households are indicative of consumerist behaviour in this region .Emigration offered massive employment opportunities and a better source of income for the people at certain times. But, the situation is not so favourable at present. The policy of Nithakkath and gulf recession offers a threat to the aspirant labourers in general and those unskilled in particular.

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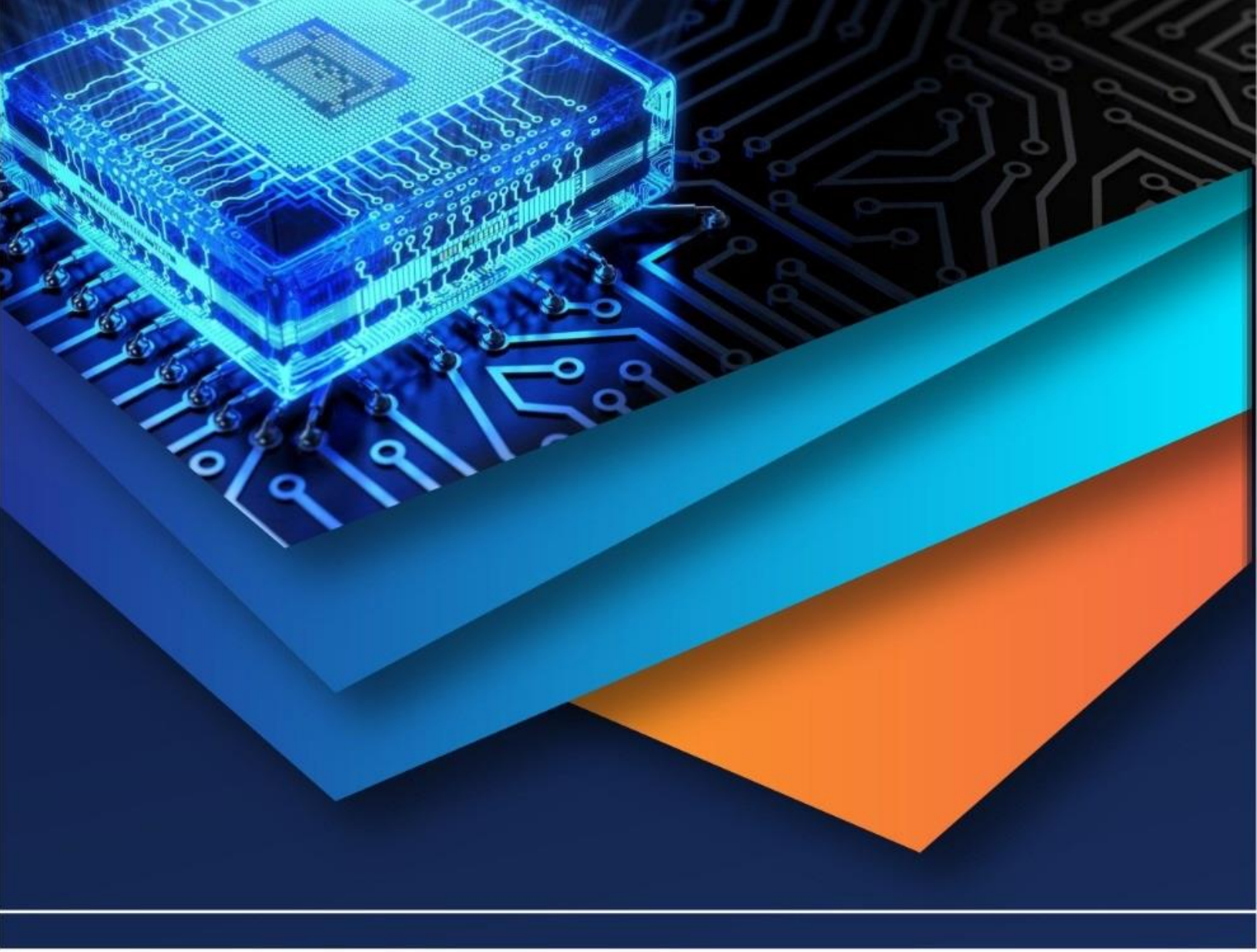

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