

Labour Migration To The GCC Countries

Prof. Baqer Al-Najjar
University of Bahrain
Kingdom of Bahrain
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Population Of The Gulf

- GCC countries represent a unique phenomenon with regards to their population composition.
- Unlike many other countries in the world, they constitute a minority within their own countries.
- UAE national represent not more than 8% of the total UAE population, and not more than 60% in the case of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Oman.

- Population of the GCC countries has jumped from 7,766 (million) in 1970 to 13,700 (million) in 1980, and to 33,075 (million) in 2005.
- The highest annual growth rate took place during the period of 1975-1985.
- The oil boom of the 1970s is a major factor behind the large influx of foreign labour.

Table1
Medium Projection
(2025 -1990()%(For GCC States Population and Average Annual Growth Rate

Year Period	State						
	Kuwait	Qatar	Sultanat of Oman	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Kingdom of Bahrain	United Arab Emirates	
)In Thousand(Population						
1950	152	25	456	3.201	115	70	
1955	199	35	603	3.503	134	79	
1960	278	45	558	4.076	156	90	
1965	471	70	631	4.793	191	144	
1970	744	111	723	5.745	220	223	
1975	1.007	171	880	7.251	272	505	
1980	1.375	229	1.130	9.604	347	1.015	
1985	1.720	358	1.426	12.238	413	1.552	
1990	2.143	453	1.786	15.400	490	2.014	
1995	1.691	612	2.154	17.091	573	2.352	
2000	914.1	565	2.638	20.345	640	2.608	
2005	2.175	610	2.989	23.765	698	2.840	
2010	2.473	063	3.515	27.588	744	3.056	
2015	2.766	693	4.110	31.748	793	3.230	
2020	3.017	727	4.746	30.096	643	3.384	
2025	3.219	754	5.411	40.473	887	3.468	

(Annual Growth Rate %)

1950-1955	5.37	6.73	1.94	2.31	2.91	2.51
1955-1960	8.67	5.03	2.09	2.52	3.10	2.69
1960-1965	10.53	8.84	2.45	3.25	4.04	9.38
1965-1970	9.17	9.28	2.71	3.62	2.79	8.70
1970-1975	6.04	6.60	3.84	4.86	4.28	16.35
1975-1980	5.24	5.84	4.99	5.62	4.85	13.97
1980-1985	4.48	8.90	4.84	4.85	3.51	8.49
1985-1990	4.40	4.73	4.5	4.8	3.39	5.21
1990-1995	4.76	2.44	3.76	2.08	3.12	3.1
1995-2000	2.48	1.99	3.29	3.49	2.21	2.05
2000-2005	2.55	1.51	3.27	3.11	1.68	1.72
2005-2010	2.58	1.37	3.25	2.98	1.33	1.46
2010-2015	2.24	1.21	3.12	2.61	1.29	1.11
2015-2020	1.74	0.96	2.87	2.57	1.21	0.81
2020-2025	1.3	0.72	2.53	2.29	1.04	0.61

- The recent sharp increase in the oil prices had brought back the experience of the seventies.
- The population growth between 2000 and 2005 are averaged at 3.3%, with figures ranging between 6.4% in UAE to 4% in Qatar and 2.1% in the case on Bahrain.

- Dubai and Qatar are becoming in recent time the major recipients of the foreign labour and that is due to the growth of their construction sector.
- The high need for semi and unskilled labour has shaped the sex and age composition of non-national population.

The need for the foreign labour

- The large presence of a foreign population is primarily due to its high participation in the labour force.
- Foreign labour participation in labour force goes up to 75%.
- The private sector will remain the major employer of the foreign labour.
- They constitute over 95% of its labour force in countries like UAE and Qatar.

- The need for foreign labour in the GCC countries will continue for some long years to come.
- The interests of powerful officials and merchants, property owners and labour recruiters, in addition to the social and economic welfare of the region, depend entirely on the presence of foreign communities.
- Surely they are here to stay for unforeseeable time to come.

Table 2
Economic activities by nationality
1973-1981

	1981 Bahrain		1980 Qatar		1980 UAE		1980 Kuwait		1975 Oman		1973 Saudi	
	migrant	National	migrant	National	migrant	National	migrant	National	migrant	National	migrant	National
Agriculture	1273	2473	-	-	20936	4676	522	2927	-	-	62.9	37.1
Industries	8704	7461	-	-	54164	3217	1	5588	35.9	64.1	61.8	38.2
Construction	25358	3903	-	-	153483	1497	423	1309	66.6	33.4	47.6	52.4
,Gas	999	1875	-	-	-	-	15	2070	19.5	80.5	21.7	78.3
electric	12.67	5836	-	-	70452	3879	958	4592	46.0	.45	52.8	47.2
Commerce	1	26990	-	-	38894	3144	35	7849	18.6	81.4	46.1	53.9
Transport	4524	979	-	-	115043	37838	610	78263	64.0	36.1	56.3	43.7
Services	25242						1		-	-	-	-
Others	9245						541					
							53					
							223					
							27					
							154					
							656					
Total	88015	58124	102,763	18,910	502,972	54,251	38,608	130,498	41,8	84,2	49,8	50.2

Table 3
Labour force by nationality -1997

State	National	migrant	Total	-Non % national
UAE	135.5	1.154.8	1.290.3	89.5
Bahrain	106.5	176.7	283.2	62.3
Saudi	2.456.2	4.603.2	7.059.4	65.2
Oman	283.1	282.1	817.2	65.4
Qatar	33.2	23.2	230.6	85.6
Kuwait	194.9	194.9	1.133.9	82.8
Total	3.208.4	7.606.2	10.814.6	70.3

Table 4**Labour force in GCC Countries-in Thousands (1995-2002)**

year	State						
	Kuwait	Qatar	Sultanas of Oman	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Kingdom of Bahrain	United Arab Emirates	Total
1995	1.132.0	238.5	510.8	6.575.2	201.8	1.074.4	8.500.7
1996	1.179.9	241.3	511.7	6.554.6	213.0	1.108.7	10.081.3
1997	1.232.8	285.7	531.4	8.988.9	283.2	1.477.0	10.845.1
1998	1.248.1	315.5	634.5	7.079.5	294.7	1.760.0	9.241.6
1999	1.207.2	316.5	633.9	5.864.9	291.1	1.909.0	10.114.5
2000	1.214.3	322.9	861.2	5.986.9	300.7	2.079.0	10.381.5
2001	1.320.2		704.9	6.089.8	308.3		10.719.2
2002			731.5				2.051.7

Problem of unemployment

- **Can you imagine the problem of unemployment in the GCC countries?**
- **Looking for a job is a difficult task in the case of Saudi, Bahraini, and Omani nationals.**
- **Unemployment is the problem officials tend to talk about secretly.**

- **It constitutes 20% among the Saudis, 15% among the Bahrainis and Omanis.**
- **The problem of unemployment stems from the fact that education produces more graduate in comparison to the number of jobs created by the economy.**
- **During the period from 1996-2000, 90% to 75% of jobs that were created in UAE and Kuwait were taken by foreign labour.**

- **80% of these new jobs are mainly created within the private sector and are with low wages.**
- **In Bahrain 80% of jobs are mainly created by private sector and filled by Bahrainis, and with wages that are less than \$500 per month.**
- **Retraining and replacement programmes have produced little results.**

- It is a cultural and social problem before it can be an economic one.
- It has produced political problems to authorities of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.
- Mackenzie and NRS in Bahrain and Sanad in Oman have produced results, but it has a long way to achieve the goals.

Regional and Arab Cooperation

- Arab and regional treaties on the movement of Arab labour looks impressive on papers, yet difficult on the ground.
- Nationals come before the others.
- GCC citizens come before the others.

- Arabs come before the others.
- But the market determines who come first.
- Asians have more skills, are more docile, and accept lower wages and come single, so they come first.

Cooping with Challenges of Globalization

- To cope with the challenges of globalization GCC labour law system needs to be improved in these areas:
 - 1- The right to establish labour union.
 - 2- The collective bargaining structure needs to be enhanced.
 - 3- the regulation of labour force needs to be improved.
 - 4- The sponsorship system needs to be abolished.