

The Employment Life of Indian Expatriates in the GCC: A Study on Job Satisfaction, Stress, and Respect.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the professional well-being of Indian expatriates in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. It focuses on the influence of gender, marital status, and family structure. The research employed a structured questionnaire to assess key dimensions including job satisfaction, job stress, personal respect, and views on nationalization programs. Data were analyzed using t-tests, ANOVA, and multiple linear regressions.

The results reveal significant gender-based disparities. Men report significantly higher job satisfaction and a lesser negative impact of job stress on their personal lives compared to women. Regression analysis acknowledged personal respect as the strongest positive predictor of job satisfaction and job stress was the strongest negative predictor. Moreover, marital and family status were found to be important factors, with married women, particularly those living with children, reporting the lowest levels of satisfaction and personal respect. In contrast, perceptions of personal respect and nationalization programs showed no significant gender differences.

The study concludes that the employment experiences of Indian expatriates in the GCC are not uniform but are critically shaped by demographic and familial factors. It recommends targeted organizational policies to promote gender equity, encourage inclusive and respectful workplaces, and provide family support systems to enhance the well-being and maintenance of this vital labour force.

Keywords: Indian Expatriates, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Job Satisfaction, Gender Disparities, Personal Respect, Family Structure, Nationalization Policies.

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INTRODUCTION

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have long been a major destination for Indian expatriates, forming a fundamental part of the regional economy. Based on emigration clearance data, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, the Population of Non Resident Indians is 32 million and 2-5 million Indians migrate every year. India's geographical pattern of migration has been ever dominated by GCC countries while the other regions like US, the UK, Canada, and South Africa has been around 30%. According to the Ministry of External affairs, India's emigration to the GCC region in the year of 2020 is 0.90 Lakhs. However, the life experiences of Indian workers based on their job satisfaction, perceived respect and the interplay between work and personal life are complex and versatile. This study explores into the employment life of Indian expatriates in the GCC, examining how factors like gender, marital status, and family structure influence key dimensions of their professional well-being.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the article published by Forum IAS Redbook, **Anshul Mishra, IAS (2024)** says that Indians being the largest expatriate community in the GCC countries comes around 30% of the total expatriate work force in the region.

Though the Indian population is very significant and worth some in the GCC countries in the matter of economy for resident country and the mother land, they confront many challenges in their social and personal life.

In the study conducted by **Amba Pande (2018)** with a critical analysis on India's Experience with Remittances, it has been described very obviously that the NRI remittances have a high level influence in reviving our economy which is currently slowing down.

The article published by Kadira Pethiyagoda (2017) in the journal of Brookings Institution, Qatar, says that some gulf countries have recently taken steps to improve the conditions of migrant workers. He puts the case of Saudi Arabia as an example. Saudi made 38 amendments in the labour law in October 2015 which was a success in the area. It even covers provisions that increase paid leave and compensate job related injuries. The author reports that more than 1,440 firms were shut down due to failure to safeguard labours wages.

A research was carried out by International Labour Organization (ILO) to see and resolve the problems faced by the expats in the GCC. The researchers **Lea Baou Khater, Luca Pellerano and Ryszard Cholewinski (2024)** say that workers in the GCC countries experience

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State	Men	Women	Men Percentage	Women Percentage
Kerala	156	37	97.5%	92.5%
Andhra	0	1	0	2.5%
Karnataka	2	1	1.25%	2.5%
New Delhi	1	1	0.625%	2.5%
Gujarat	1	0	0.625%	0
Total	160	40	100%	100%
Country of Residence				
Saudi Arabia	28	2	17.5%	5%
UAE	63	13	39.375%	32.5%
Oman	30	25	18.750%	62.5%
Qatar	19	0	11.875%	0
Bahrain	9	0	5.625%	0
Kuwait	11	0	6.875%	0
Total	160	40	100%	100%

important gaps with respect to labour protection as well as fundamental rights at work apart from limited access to social protection.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sampling and Demographics

As the nature of Indian population is dispersed and is very difficult to access in the GCC, a snowball sampling technique was employed, utilizing Indian social organizations to reach potential respondents. The snowball sampling technique is suggested to adopt in the cases of difficult accessibility and unaffordable expenditure. (Ahmadzadehasl M and Ariasepehr S, 2010; Mahin Naderifar et. al., 2017). The final sample consisted of 200 valid responses.

Table 1. Sample Demographics

Subgroup Name	Men (%)	Women (%)
Unmarried Expat	7 (4.375%)	8 (20%)
Married Expat Live Alone	81 (50.625%)	2 (5%)
Married Expat Live with Spouse and Children	65 (40.625%)	23 (57.5%)
Married Expat Living with Spouse	7 (4.375%)	7 (17.5%)
Total	160 (100%)	40 (100%)

Job Class		
White Collar	84 (52.5%)	22 (55%)
Blue Collar	23 (14.37%)	0 (0)
Professionals	39 (24.375%)	17 (42.5%)
Business Men	14 (8.75%)	1 (2.5%)
Total	160 (100%)	40 (100%)
Age Group		
22-30	24 (15%)	13 (32.5%)
31-40	56 (35%)	13 (32.5%)
41-50	55 (34.375%)	11 (27.5%)
51-60	23 (14.375%)	3 (7.5%)
61 and Above	2 (1.25%)	0 (0%)
Total	160 (100%)	40 (100%)

Table 2. The Sample Domain

The tables of Demographics Table 1 and 2 show that the participants were predominantly male (80%) and tremendously represented by expatriates from the state of Kerala (96.5%). The majority was between 31-50 years old, graduates or postgraduates, and was employed in white-collar or professional jobs. The UAE and Oman were the most common host countries. For a detailed analysis, the sample was divided into eight demographic subgroups based on gender and family structure (e.g., unmarried men, married women living with children, etc.).

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected via a structured questionnaire using a 4-point Likert scale (4=Excellent to 1=Very Unsatisfactory). The analysis compared mean satisfaction scores and standard deviations across subgroups and employed independent samples t-tests, one-way ANOVA, and multiple linear regressions to test for significant differences and identify key predictors.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Key Findings from t-Test Analysis

The table below compares the mean satisfaction scores of women (n=40) and men (n=160) across five key dimensions.

Table 3. Consolidated Table of Independent Samples t-Tests

Dimension	Women Mean (SD)	Men Mean (SD)	Mean Difference (W - M)	t-statistic (df)	p-value	95% CI	Cohen's d
Job Satisfaction	2.78 (0.44)	3.08 (0.35)	-0.30	t(198) = -4.36	< 0.001 *	[-0.43, -0.16]	-0.76

Job Stress Impact	2.65 (0.49)	2.93 (0.59)	-0.28	t(198) = -3.24	0.001*	[-0.45, -0.11]	-0.52
Stress Control	2.73 (0.47)	2.86 (0.58)	-0.13	t(198) = -1.56	0.120	[-0.30, +0.04]	-0.24
Personal Respect	2.73 (0.81)	2.68 (0.74)	+0.05	t(198) = 0.36	0.720	[-0.23, +0.33]	0.07
Nationalization Program	1.53 (0.68)	1.53 (0.68)	0.00	t(198) = 0.00	1.000	[-0.19, +0.19]	0.00

*Note: *p < .05; Cohen's d: |d|~0.2=Small, |d|~0.5=Medium, |d|~0.8=Large.*

The analysis reveals a clear pattern of gender-based disparities. Men reported **significantly higher job satisfaction** (Men: 3.08 vs. Women: 2.78, p<.001) and experienced a **less negative impact of job stress** on their personal lives (Men: 2.93 vs. Women: 2.65, p=.001), with medium to large effect sizes (d = -0.52 to -0.76). A non-significant trend also suggested men felt more in control of their job stress (p=.120).

Conversely, no significant gender differences were found for **Personal Respect** (p=.720) or satisfaction with the **Nationalization Programs** (p=1.000). Notably, satisfaction with nationalization policies was uniformly low for both men and women (Mean=1.53).

In summary, the primary challenges for female Indian expatriates appear to be lower overall job satisfaction and a greater susceptibility to work-life stress, rather than a lack of personal respect or uniquely negative views on nationalization policies.

4.1.1 Gender Gap in Overall Job Satisfaction

The most obvious finding of the study was that there is a significant disparity in overall job satisfaction among the Indian expats in the GCC. Men reported higher satisfaction (M=3.08) than women (M=2.78). This difference was statistically significant with a large effect size. Subgroup analysis showed that unmarried men were the most satisfied

group (Mean=3.43), while married women living only with their husbands were the least (Mean=2.57).

4.1.2 The Impact of Job Stress

The data reveals that job stress affects the personal and familial lives of men and women differently. Men reported a considerably higher mean score (2.93). It suggests that personal/family life of men is not affected negatively much by job stress than women (2.65). Unmarried men and women living alone reported the least impact, whereas married women with children were the most affected.

4.1.3 Personal Respect and Nationalization

In contrast to job satisfaction, perceptions of personal respect showed no significant gender difference. However, variability was high, pointing to polarized experiences within subgroups. Furthermore, the study uncovered huge range of dissatisfaction with nationalization programs across all demographic groups, without observed gender difference.

Dependent variable: Job Satisfaction (1–4 scale).

Predictors: Gender, Marital Status, Family Structure, Stress, Respect

4.2 Advanced Statistical Analysis

4.2.1 Job Satisfaction Predictors: A Regression Model

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Results (Predicting Job Satisfaction)

Predictor	β (Coefficient)	SE	t-value	p-value	95% CI	VIF
(Intercept)	2.15	0.31	6.93	<0.001***	[1.54, 2.76]	–
Gender (Male=1)	0.28	0.07	4.00	<0.001***	[0.14, 0.42]	1.12
Married (Yes=1)	-0.12	0.09	-1.33	0.185	[-0.30, 0.06]	1.45
Children (Yes=1)	-0.18	0.08	-2.25	0.026*	[-0.34, -0.02]	1.67
Job Stress	-0.35	0.06	-5.83	<0.001***	[-0.47, -0.23]	1.22

Predictor	β (Coefficient)	SE	t-value	p-value	95% CI	VIF
Personal Respect	0.41	0.05	8.20	<0.001***	[0.31, 0.51]	1.08
Stress Control	0.22	0.04	5.50	<0.001***	[0.14, 0.30]	1.15

A multiple linear regression was conducted to identify the key predictors of overall job satisfaction. The model explained 52% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.52$), revealing the following: Strongest Positive Predictor was Personal Respect ($\beta = +0.41$, $*p^* < .001$) where as the Strongest Negative Predictor was the Job Stress ($\beta = -0.35$, $*p^* < .001$). Other Significant Factors shall be interpreted as: Better Stress Control ($\beta = +0.22$, $*p^* < .001$) increased

satisfaction, while having children ($\beta = -0.18$, $*p^* = .026$) decreased it.

Even after controlling for other factors, being male ($\beta = +0.28$, $*p^* < .001$) remained a significant positive predictor of job satisfaction.

4.2.2 The Influence of Marital and Family Status (ANOVA)

Table 5. One-Way ANOVA Results (Marital/Family Status Differences)

Compares means across subgroups (e.g., unmarried women, married men with children, etc.).

Dimension	F-statistic (df)	p-value	Significant Group Differences (Post-hoc)	Partial η^2 (Effect Size)
Job Satisfaction	F(7, 192) = 4.56	<0.001***	Unmarried men (3.43) > Married women (husband only: 2.57; p=0.002)	0.14 (Medium)
Personal Respect	F(7, 192) = 3.22	0.003**	Married women (w/ children: 1.96) < Unmarried women (2.75; p=0.008), Married men (live alone: 2.40; p=0.012)	0.10 (Small-Medium)
Nationalization Program	F(7, 192) = 1.98	0.058	No significant differences after adjustment (Unmarried women trend higher: 1.75 vs. 1.48–1.53)	0.06 (Small)
Job Stress	F(7, 192) = 2.87	0.007**	Unmarried men/women (3.00) > Married women (w/ husband only: 2.71; p=0.023)	0.09 (Small)
Stress Control	F(7, 192) = 1.45	0.190	No significant differences	0.05 (Small)

A one-way ANOVA confirmed that marital and family status significantly influences experiences

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Job Satisfaction: Significant differences were found ($F(7,192)=4.56$, $*p^* < .001$), with unmarried men scoring the highest and married women (husband only) scoring the lowest.
Personal Respect: Significant differences ($F(7,192)=3.22$, $*p^* = .003$), with married women with children reporting significantly lower respect.
Job Stress Impact: Significant differences ($F(7,192)=2.87$, $*p^* = .007$), confirming that family dynamics play a key role in how stress spills over into personal life.

This study portrays a detailed picture of the employment life of Indian expatriates in the GCC. The findings lead to several critical conclusions and recommendations.

A significant gender gap exists in overall job satisfaction and the experience of job stress, with women constantly faring worse. This calls for targeted organizational policies aimed at promoting gender equity, such as mentorship programs, apparent promotion criteria, and support systems for female expatriate Indians.

Personal respect in the job environment is found as the single strongest predictor of job satisfaction. Companies should invest in developing inclusive cultures, training programs for cross-cultural management.

Marital status and the presence of children significantly impact the well-being of the expatriates. Employers can

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

offer support through flexible work arrangements, childcare assistance, and family integration programs to lessen the strain, particularly on employees with families.

The awesome negativity toward nationalization programs is a planned challenge. Proactive communication, career selection that acknowledges these policies, and support for skills development can help manage anxiety and maintain talent.

In summary, Indian workers in the GCC countries face different challenges depending on their gender, family situation, and job. Recognizing these differences is the means to improving their employment life and their vital contribution to the region's economy

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