FICCI

# Future of Employment and New Skills in GCC Countries

(Mapping Kerala's Skilled Workers Prospects in a Post Covid19 Economy)



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FICCI

**FICCI Kerala State Council**

**Federation of**
**Indian Chambers**
**of Commerce and Industry**
VII Floor, Alpha Plaza Building
K. P. Vallon Road, North End
Kadavanthra Junction
Cochin - 682020
Kerala
T +91 0484 4058041/42
+91 0484 4876976
F +91 0484 2310332
E savio.mathew@ficci.com, kesc@ficci.com
www.ficci.com

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Dear Shri. Harikrishnan Namboothiri K,

Greetings from FICCI Kerala State Council!

In continuance with the successful conduct of Overseas Employers Conference organised by Norka in association with FICCI on 12 October 2021 and the subsequent intimation received from NORKA (Non Resident Keralite's Affairsdated) 02 November 2021 to submit a study proposal for Overseas Employers Connectivity on a long term prospective, FICCI KESC has undertaken a comprehensivestudy on Employers Connectivity.

We are glad to submit our comprehensive study along with detailed proposed plan of action which includes Kerala's Economy and International Migration, Need of Reforms in Education& Skilling, Technological Disruption, Future Employments in GCC Countries Outlook, Key Employers and Opportunities in GCC Countries, Future Employments Sectors and Related Occupations, New Skills Sets, Stake holders and collaboration & Recommendations.

We sincerely hope that the study would facilitate as how an eco-system would provide reliable information and capacity building for the skilled workers in the state of Kerala, as they strive to transition towards a reliable work placements in GCC countries.

Thanks & Regards

Savio Mathew
Head – FICCI Kerala State Council
Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry

# Future of Employment and New Skills in GCC Countries

## 1. Introduction & Rationale

### a. Kerala's Economy and International Migration

Since the growth of oil industry in the mid-1970s in the Gulf nations, migration and migration remittances has changed the labour market, consumption, savings, investment, poverty, income distribution and economy of Kerala.

The six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain remains one of the most sought-after and competitive labour markets in the world. The GCC countries is distinguished by extreme dependence on migrant workers, unparalleled elsewhere in the world. Kerala has a long history of migration to the Gulf countries for work. Over 90 percent of emigration from Kerala is to GCC countries. State has close to two million migrant workers in the Gulf region. A third of the population of Kerala directly benefits through migration, while another third benefits indirectly through multiplier effects. More than a third of remittances to Kerala are household remittances.

Remittances amount to over 35 % of the Kerala's income. Remittances are usually understood as financial or in-kind transfers made by migrants to friends and relatives back in communities of origin. In 2020, the top three source countries for remittance outflows in current USD were the United States (68 billion), the United Arab Emirates (43 billion) and Saudi Arabia (35 billion). The top recipient country for remittances inflows in current USD was India (83 billion) and has been the largest recipient of remittances since 2008. In India, remittances are almost double the size of foreign direct investment.



Despite COVID-19, remittance flows remained resilient in 2020, registering a smaller decline than previously projected. In India, remittances fell by just 0.2% in 2020, withmuch of the decline due to a 17% drop in remittances from the United Arab Emirates, which offset resilient flows from the United States and other host countries (Ratha, 2021).

'Kerala Return Emigrant Survey 2021' carried out by the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) and the International Institute of Migration and Development (IIMAD) found that almost 60 per cent of the returning emigrants (REM) wish to re-migrate in search of an employment, while 30% of them wish to reintegrate into Kerala society and find the means of employment or retirement here itself. Further, among the 47% who lost their employments as a result of COVID impact, 39 per cent have reported non-payment of wages or dues as well as a reduction in wages. (Kallungal, 2021). The travel bans, lockdowns and social-distancing rules have reduce the incomes of migrants or lead to their unemployment. Low-skilled workers and undocumented workers were the hardest hit.

## b. Need of Reforms in Education & Skilling

The change of immigration policy of the UAE government in 1999 reduced substantially the demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labourers to the oil rich GGC countries. Additionally, when the problems in the United States housing sector mushroomed into a global financial crisis by September 2008, not only pushed the advanced economies into recession, but also it shattered global economic confidence, resulting in a massive financial contagion around the world and the GCC countries (Sharma, 2010). The 2003–08 oil price boom strengthened GCC countries' fiscal and external balances and placed them in a relatively strong position to confront the global crisis. However, the boom resulted in rapid credit growth, a rise in inflation and asset prices, and a build-up of financial sector vulnerability (Khamis&Senhadji, 2010).Financial recessions impacted the labour market in the GCC countries.

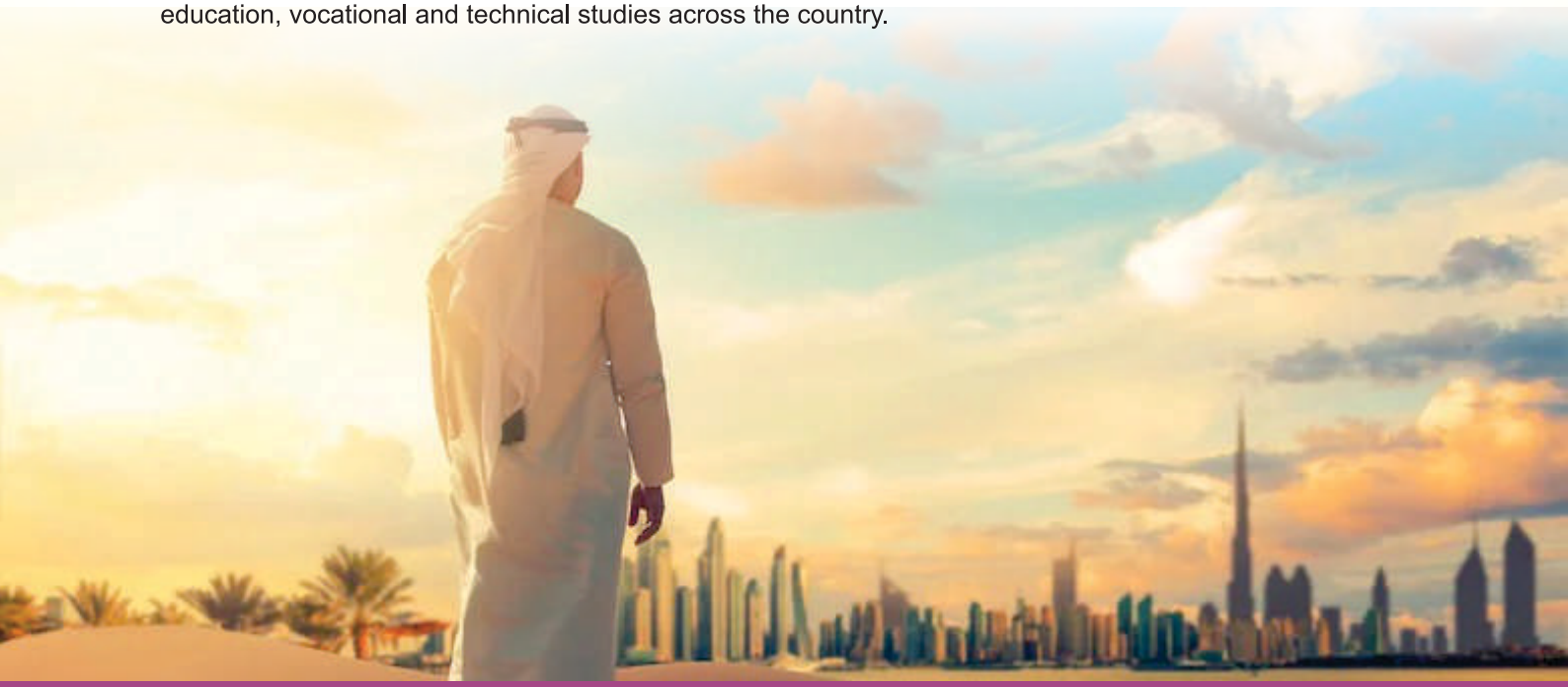


Nevertheless the gulf dream continues to attract the migrants. The supply of labour overwhelmingly outweighs demand, making it extremely difficult to controlrecruitment practices. The unskilled and semi-skilled migrant workers, whom are fully aware of the risks involved, are willing to pay a stiff premium to work in the GCC countries. They not only pay onerous sums of money to sometimes unscrupulous recruitment agencies but accept less-than-ideal work and living conditions once at destination (Agunias, 2012).This clearly is not sustainable migration for the economic well-being of the migrant family and the country. There is requirement of skilled workers across GCC countries, so it important to upgrade skills of the employment seekers.

There have been interventions by the Union Government through National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) in 2008 and through Non Resident Keralites Affairs (NORKA) a department of the Government of Kerala. Though these helped in increasing the recruitments but there is still vast scope for improvements to enhance the quality of training to match the requirements of industry & clearly establishing a connect between demand and supply of skilled manpower.

Implementation has been always a challenge in India, which was reflected in 2015 Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report of irregularities and performance of NSDC, made a recommendation to the Union government to re-look at the design and operations of the NSDC and National Skill Development Fund to ensure achievement of skill development goals. Little has changed in the country in the skilling sector for domestic and international market.

What is required is an integration of vocational, technical and entrepreneurial skills training right from the school days, building of new skills and innovative thinking of future employment markets. It was to be beyond the bookish knowledge of the educators. The education framework has to change right from the school, high education, vocational and technical studies across the country.



## c. Technological Disruption and Future Employments

Disruptive technology is an innovation that significantly alters the way that consumers, industries, or businesses operate. A disruptive technology sweeps away the systems or habits it replaces because it has attributes that are recognizably superior. Recent disruptive technology examples include e-commerce, online news sites, ride-sharing apps, GPS systems and Block chain.

The Mckinsey Global Institute report states: "Automation technologies including artificial intelligence and robotics will generate significant benefits for users, businesses, and economies, lifting productivity and economic growth. The extent to which these technologies displace workers will depend on the pace of their development and adoption, economic growth, and growth in demand for work. Even as it causes declines in some occupations, automation will change many more — 60 percent of occupations have at least 30% of constituent work activities that could be automated. It will also create new occupations that do not exist today, much as technologies of the past have done."

The report shows that the manufacturing, factory workers, repair workers and cleaners are seeing the greatest large-scale sector employment declines. So business in GCC countries are adapting to the changes and so are the requirements of the skilled workers who are ready to embrace the disruptive technology. Disruptive technology and automation is set to make certain employments obsolete. As automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) lift productivity and economic growth, many new employments will be created. So migrant worker need to consider retraining or up skilling.

Digital Revolution is the need of the hour & must take advantage of the tools it offers and begin to explore the new technological careers that are in such high demand. Technology creates more employments than it destroys over time; the key is having the skills to access these employments.



## 2. GCC Countries Outlook According to World Bank

I. **Bahrain:** Bahrain will continue to rely on fiscal support measures in 2022 to overcome the economic contraction in 2020. GDP growth is expected to reach 3.3% in 2022 and remain at the same pace during the medium-term.

ii. **Kuwait:** Oil exports will continue to drive Kuwait's growth dynamics. Economic growth is forecast to an average 3.2% in 2022-23.

iii. **Oman:** Oman's economy is forecast to recover in 2022, albeit at a moderate 2.5% growth rate as a sizable infrastructure investment program gains momentum.

iv. **Qatar:** Qatar is forecast to post a strong growth rebound with LNG demand in South and East Asia underpinning medium-term prospects. Qatar's economy is projected to grow by 4.1% in 2022 and 4.5% in 2023.

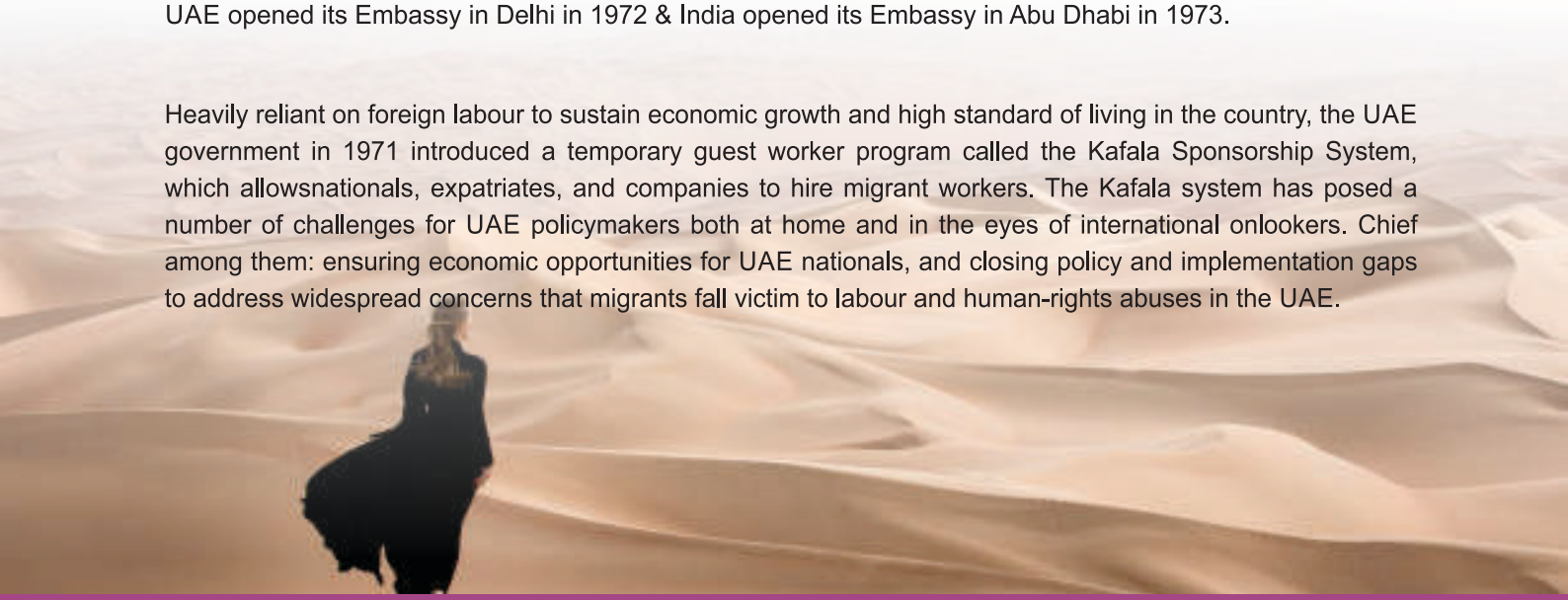
v. **Saudi Arabia:** Firmer global oil demand will support Saudi Arabia's economic recovery in 2022 with GDP growth expected to reach 2.4% in 2022. Medium-term growth is projected to average 3% over the forecast period.

vi. **United Arab Emirates:** The UAE is expected to swing back to growth in 2022, estimated at 2.5% in 2022 and 2023 driven by government expenditures and the staging of Expo 2022.

## 3. Key Employers and Opportunities and Indian Companies Operating in GCC countries

I. **United Arab Emirates**: India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) established diplomatic relations in 1972. UAE opened its Embassy in Delhi in 1972 & India opened its Embassy in Abu Dhabi in 1973.

Heavily reliant on foreign labour to sustain economic growth and high standard of living in the country, the UAE government in 1971 introduced a temporary guest worker program called the Kafala Sponsorship System, which allowsnationals, expatriates, and companies to hire migrant workers. The Kafala system has posed a number of challenges for UAE policymakers both at home and in the eyes of international onlookers. Chief among them: ensuring economic opportunities for UAE nationals, and closing policy and implementation gaps to address widespread concerns that migrants fall victim to labour and human-rights abuses in the UAE.





Indian investments in the UAE are estimated at around US $ 85 billion. There are 4365 Indian companies, 238 commercial agencies and 4862 trademarks registered in the UAE. UAE's investment in India is estimated to be around US$13-14 billion; it is the 10th biggest FDI investor for India. UAE's investments in India are mainly in five sectors: Services Sector (15.78%), Sea Transport (8.80%), Power (8.34%), Construction Activities (Infrastructure -7.15%) and Construction Development (Townships, Housing, Built-Up Infrastructure and Construction-Development Projects - 7.08%).

Many leading Indian companies like HCL Infosystems, Wipro, TATA, Nagarjuna Construction Company Limited, Danube, L&T, ESSAR, Dodsal, Punj Lloyd, EIL, Sobha Group, Indian Oil Corporation, Reliance Industries, Essar Group and banks like Bank of Baroda, State Bank of India, IDBI Bank, Union Bank of India, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Punjab National Bank, IndusInd Bank, Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, HDFC, ICICI, Axis Bank, Andhra Bank, Canara Bank, Corporation Bank, New India Assurance Co. have offices in the UAE.

ii. **Saudi Arabia:** India and Saudi Arabia enjoy cordial and friendly relations reflecting the centuries old economic and socio-cultural ties. The establishment of diplomatic relations in 1947 was followed by high-level visits from both sides. Several Saudi Companies have invested in India through their non-Saudi subsidiaries, primarily on the petro chemical industry.

Major Indian Companies such as L&T, TATAs, Wipro, TCS, TCIL, Shapoorji&Pallonji, have established strong presence in Saudi Arabia. SAGIA is in talks with Indian Start - Ups such as OYO, Delhivery, Firstcry, Grofers, Policy Bazaar, Paytm to enter the Saudi market.

Through 2013 to 2017, there was amnesty for overstaying expatriates to correct the status, get new employments or leave the country without facing penal action. More than 1.4 lakh Indians availed the amnesty and returned back to home without facing penalty. Additionally another 70, 000 undocumented Indians were issued travel documents to return back to India.

iii. **Qatar:** Indian companies have invested about US$450 million in Qatar, according to a statement by Qatar Financial Centre (QFC). Indian companies from across sectors have been present in Qatar for over several years and among them are Larsen & Toubro, Voltas, ShapoorjiPallonji, Wipro, TCS and Tech Mahindra. MajorQatari investments in India in recent times to Airtel Africa Ltd, BYJU's, AdaniTransmissions, Verse Innovations, Swiggys.

There is a MoU for Cooperation in Skill Development and Recognition of Qualifications between the two countries. In 2021, the whole gamut of bilateral relations were reviewed including political, energy, trade, investments, defense, food security, health security, science and technology, consular, community and cultural aspects.

iv. **Oman:** India and Oman have expanded their bilateral cooperation and exchanges since establishment of diplomatic relations in 1955, forging a mutually beneficial strategic partnership. According to Oman's Ministry of Commerce and Industry, there are over 3200 Indian enterprises and establishments in Oman. Oman-India Joint Investment Fund (OIJIF) is a 50-50 Joint Venture between State Bank of India and State General Reserve Fund (SGRF) of Oman, the main sovereign wealth fund of Oman. In addition to various strategic investments, L&T, Jindal, EPIL,



ShapoorjiPallonji, Shriram, Aditya Birla Group, Nagarjuna Construction Company, KEC International, etc. have been executing various projects in Oman. Indian financial institutions like SBI, Bank of Baroda, HDFC Ltd and ICICI Securities as well as Indian PSUs like Air India, Air India Express, LIC, New India Assurance Co., TCIL, EIL, EPIL and NBCC have presence in Oman.

v. **Kuwait:** Indian PSUs like TCIL, LIC (International), LIC Housing Finance, New India Assurance Company, Oriental Insurance Company, Air India Ltd. (Air India and Air India Express) have offices in Kuwait. During the last two years, Indian EPC companies viz. Larsen & Toubro, ShapoorjiPallonji, Punj Lloyd, Simplex Projects, Essar, Kalpataru etc. were awarded EPC contracts worth over US$ 6 billion in Kuwait. Estimated investments in India are over US$ 5 billion, majority of which is by Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA).

vi. **Bahrain:** India and Bahrain enjoy excellent bilateral relations. There are 23 branches of prominent Indian banks/companies registered in Bahrain and 3,181 Indian joint venture companies are registered in Bahrain. Financial Services has highest investment value (40 % of total projects), followed by real estate and hospitality sector. The Indian expatriate community enjoys great goodwill from the Bahraini authorities and the employers alike. In terms of professions, the vast majority: 70% of our nationals are in the category of unskilled labour.

## 4. Future Employments Sectors and Related Occupations

A Google employment search would results in thousands of employment vacancies, clearly indicating the demand and wages for skilled workers in the GCC countries exist. The traditional recruitment agents and major online recruitment sites like Bayt, Indeed, Nakuri, Monstergulf, Snaphunt, Gulftalent, Laimoon, Neuvoo, Jooble facilitating the requirements of various sectors. As the demand increases, so is the volumes of applications that are often scanned digitally through applicant tracking system enabling unbiased hiring. So the candidates must have the requirements



clearly highlighted to be qualified for the interview process. This calls for the right education, updated technology knowledge, skills and experience.

Excellent verbal and written English communication skills and computer literacy is a must in most skilled workers beyond the sector specific requirements. Additionally the cross functional skills remain an advantage for the applicants. We highlight some of the sectors and their skills, enabling the stakeholders in Kerala to realign their technical training and education curriculum according to the market requirements.

## Major Employment Opportunities Sectors are as follows:-

### I. Accountancy, Banking and Finance

**Qualification:** Bachelor's degree in Commerce / Business / Accounting
Professional accreditation: ACA, ACCA, CPA, CIMA, CMA.

**Technology Knowledge and Experience:**

a. ERP and accounting software experience in Finance Modules (Zoho Books, Tally ERP 9, Microsoft Dynamics GP, Fresh Books, Wave, Xero, Quickbooks, SageIntacct).

b. System knowledge - MS Office, SUN Financials, Vision, Hyperion Financial Management.

c. Experience in Microsoft Technologies (SQL Server, VBA)

d. Knowledge of advanced Excel functions.

e. Additionally, desirable candidate should have work experience for a year or two at an accounting/ audit firms or a company.

### ii. Engineering and Manufacturing

Civil Engineering and Petroleum Engineering is in high demand with oil industry. Nevertheless, the governments of GCC countries are turning to sectors such as production and manufacturing to diversify their economies. The result is more employments in the industrial and manufacturing engineering scope for a variety of posts, from technician and supervisor, salesmen, engineers and managers.



UAE has already announced plans to increase the contribution of manufacturing from the current 11% of GDP to 25% by 2025, while Saudi Arabia is investing in building six new “economic cities”.

According to the UAE's Department of Economic Development (DED), the manufacturing sector already accounts for 80 percent of Dubai's non-oil trade, making it the second largest contributor to the UAE's economy.

Major manufacturing sub-sectors include: Processed food and beverages, Plastics and rubber, Electrical machinery and equipment, Chemicals and chemical products, Minerals and mineral products, Base metals, Publishing and printing, Pearls, precious stones and metals. The country's capital, Abu Dhabi, has been emphasizing heavy industry due to the availability of low-cost energy, while the Emirates of Dubai and Sharjah focus on services and light industries. Currently, there are approximately 5,200 industrial establishments in the UAE with a total employment of nearly 400,000 workers (Wright, 2016) .

Manufacturing will mostly be automated and thus there is also demand on robotics engineering.

**Qualification:** Requires a technical or university degree in an appropriate engineering or manufacturing related field.

**Experience:** Previous experience of at least two years and for managerial role an experience of four to six years.

## iii. Healthcare

A healthcare worker is one who delivers care and services to the sick and ailing either directly as doctors and nurses or indirectly as aides, helpers, laboratory technicians, or even medical waste handlers. At present, according to McKinsey & Company study

the GCC is unable to produce sufficient numbers of clinical staff to provide health care for its population. As a result, foreign workers can comprise up to 80 percent of physicians in some countries.

In regard to nurses and midwives, among the GCC countries, before the pandemic, the Kerala government-run Overseas Development and Employment Promotion Consultants (ODEPC) was sending around 40 nurses abroad every month. But in the first 23 days of February 2021, it had sent 253 nurses — more than a six-fold increase. According to the ODEPC, the salary offers from Dubai have more than doubled from 4,000-5,000 dirham (Rs 80,000- Rs 1 lakh) to 10,000-12,000 dirham (Rs 2 lakh-2.4 lakh). While the demand in Gulf countries have multiplied two to three times. The demand for ICU nurses is particularly high. Several Gulf countries have relaxed the requirement of entrance exams, apart from several other certification requirements from India, and extended special visa facilities. (Chandna, 2021). The salary is tax-free in GCC countries enabling it as attractive destination for working.

GCC healthcare predictions for 2022 is expenditure projected to reach US$ 104.6 billion, outpatient market size to grow to US$ 32.0 billion, Inpatient market projected to contribute 43.4% of healthcare expenditure. The region is expected to require 12,358 new hospital beds.

According to Alpen Capital, a high dependence on expatriates and inherent scarcity of skilled and experienced physicians and nurses has been one of the major factors hindering the growth of the healthcare sector in the GCC. Medical tourism is an integral part of the economic diversification plans of the GCC countries and, subsequently, has been receiving stimulus from governments.

To avoid been duped by recruitment agencies, candidates need to prepare and ensure that they have all the requirements of the employers than accepting the false hopes of nurses employments without employer proper diligence.



According to the national agendas of health care there is an immense requirement of healthcare workers: Oman requires 13,404 physicians including dentist and 26,056 nurses by the year 2050, Dubai requires nearly 8,300 physicians and 8,800 nurses by year 2025, and Abu Dhabi requires 1,789 doctors and 16,158 nurses.

**Qualification:**

- Bachelor's Degree / Master's Degree / Diploma in nursing.
- Basic Life Support (BLS) course certification.

**Experience:** Depending on the role, has to be 1 to 4+ years' experience with behavioural competencies for clinical duties.

GCC countries don't require English language exam scores, it's highly advisable to ensure that one gets at least one foreign language communications skills particularly English and have the required language exam (IELTS/OET) scores.

**Major Recruiters:** Apart from government and ministry of health related employments, there are significant numbers of private healthcare providers across the GCC countries.

**UAE:** Aster DM Healthcare, NMC Specialty Hospital LLC, VPS Healthcare, Thumbay Hospital, Mediclinic Hospital.

**Saudi Arabia:** Dr SolimanFakeeh Hospital, Dr Sulaiman Al Habib Medical Group, Dr Bakhsh Hospitals Group, King Khalid Military City Hospital, Green Crescent Hospital.

**Kuwait:** Al Salam International Hospital, New Mowasat Hospital, Taiba Hospital, Wara Hospital, Badr AL Samaa Hospitals, Royale Hayat Hospital, Al-Seef Hospital.

**Qatar:** Al Emadi Hospital, Hamad Medical Corporation, Naseem Al Rabeeh Medical Centre, Aster, KIMS, Apollo

**Oman:** Aster al Raffah Hospital, Burjeel Hospital, Apollo, Muscat Private Hospital, Muscat Private Hospital.





**Bahrain:** KIMS-Royal Bahrain Hospital, American Mission Hospital, Bahrain Specialist Hospital, Al Kindi Hospital, KIMS Healthcare, Aster Clinics.

## iv. Information Technology:

GCC countries are witnessing increased digital disruption with technological advancement, which will reshape many industries and enable companies to think about how they fit in the overall industry ecosystem. There are strategic investments in digitalization and telecommunications, including 5G, Internet of Things (IoT), Cloud Computing, Data and Analytics, which can help enable more economic diversification, Software Development, AI and Machine Learning, Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) and Cyber security. There is digital transformation across all industries, including oil and gas, FinTech, Retail and eLearning.

**Qualification:**

- Must have a Bachelor degree in Computer, Information Systems, Digitalization and telecommunications engineering related field.
- Internationally recognized technical certifications in relevant areas.

**Experience:** Minimum 2-3 years of progressive IT experience with at least 2years matter expertise in the specific areas of employment.

Major Recruiters: Interestingly most of the world's leading providers of business software and IT solutions have presence in the GCC countries and there is continuous demand for staff. There are also many start-ups and Indian companies that are expanding operation in the region. There are also efforts by the government run IT parks in Kerala to collaborate with CGG countries.

## v. Retail

Many of the region's retail giants are trying to adapt and embrace technology. Physical stores still dominate in this sector, but B2B marketplaces and ecommerce

are growing significantly in the region. The retail sector is expected to grow to $405 billion in the next five years, and with Saudi Arabia and UAE leading the way, the retail market in the GCC accounts for 77 percent of total sales. There is growing demand for skilled staff in store operations, inventory management, warehousing, display & marketing, sales, buying and merchandizing, logistics and supply chain management in apparels, jewellery, food & grocery, auto sales, home improvements, leisure and entertainment.

### Qualification:

- Candidates should have a Bachelor's Degree or Diploma
- For senior managerial employments, preference is given for Post-Graduation or MBA.
- Basic analytical and digital marketing skills.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English.
- The basic skills on Arithmetic, Book-keeping, Computer knowledge (ERP/MIS/ POS software, email), Communication and Marketing skills are an advantage.

**Experience:** The person with 2-4 years of experience in a retail environment with a very strong commercial acumen and experience.

Major Recruiters: Al Shaya Group, Al Futtaim Retail, Majid Al Futtaim, Savola Group, Alghanim Industries, LuLu Group International, The Chalhoub Group, AlHokair Fashion Retail, AZADEA Group, Al Tayer Group.

## vi. Transport and Logistics

COVID-19 is boosting the ecommerce business as consumers change their shopping behaviour by opting to buy online rather than shopping at physical stores. This extensive growth of e-commerce is driving the investments in e-commerce logistics related infrastructure, supply chain and technology to support the growth of the e-commerce.





In GCC countries, the sea freight segment is a very significant part of the transportation and logistics industry. Dubai's strategic location between Asia and Europe, serves both the East and the West, providing optimum trading conditions for the Emirate. The United Arab Emirates controls the largest share in the logistics market in the GCC region at 42 percent. The sector is expected to continue its growth, particularly in the country's air and sea freight markets. The technology integration in the logistics sector is high and the emergence of digital players in the pool is increasing.

The free trade or export zones referred as Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are fundamental enablers focusing on manufacturing, logistics and services across the GCC countries. The SEZs compliments the existing functional economic development, will create employments, boost and diversify exports, and expedite the industrialization process of an economy. The 100 over free zones provided employment opportunities in warehouse, logistics, purchase and various managerial roles in refrigerated containers for cold storage.

**Educational Qualification:** Higher Secondary, Diploma, Advanced/Higher Diploma, Professional Degree, Any Bachelor Degree, B.Tech/B.E

**Experience:**

- 1-2 years' experience in logistics management preferred.
- Problem-solving skills, Decision making ability, Organisational skills and Procedural mind-set.

**Major Recruiters:** Companies which ship goods, parts, and commodities from location to location as part of their regular operations define this transportation aspect of the business as logistic. Staffs ensure the efficiency of the movement of goods or components through a company's shipping system.

Able Logistics Group, Gulf Drug LLC, Himmah Logistics, DHL, Aramex, Al-Futtaim Logistics, Makkah Cold Stores, RSAGlobal, StorkomAlmar Container Groupare some of the leading players in the market.




## vii.Teacher Training and Education:

Schools of Education are emerging academic units in higher educational institutions in GCC countries. Most of these teacher training programs are in their infancy stages. Modern day educational discourse across teacher training programs in the GCC, have predominantly focused on student-centered approaches to teaching and learning. Professors, researchers, and specialists working in the GCC have contributed to this volume with the intent of empowering educators with authentic and contextualized research and insights to advance collective understanding of the complexities and challenges of teacher education and training in the GCC (Bakali&Menon, 2021). Despite the rapid development of education services, the region faces a shortage of teachers, which is where teachers from India play a vital role to bridge the gap.

The total number of students in the GCC education sector is projected to reach 14.5 million in 2022. The number of students at private schools is projected to reach 3.2 million in 2022. The GCC population is expected to reach 62 million by 2022. The school age population of K-12 education is also expected to increase to 12.1 million in 2022. Increased participation of the private sector is playing a critical role in driving the education agenda of the region. GCC governments are actively seeking to establish public-private partnerships (PPPs) to build a sustainable ecosystem and increase private sector participation.

Saudi Arabia is the largest education sector in GCC, has been moving towards a knowledge-based economy. Qatar and UAE lead their GCC counterparts based on the quality of primary education. The Saudi 'Vision 2030' plan includes a budget of US$ 6.7 billion for the education sector. UAE is the most developed education market in the GCC region with a wide presence of private institutions. The private sector

accounted for almost 90% of the K-12 students in Dubai. Due to the large presence of the expatriate community, Kuwait's private sector market for education is well established.

**Education Qualification:** Bachelor with major in Education or related field of teaching. Teachers generally from India require minimum BEd qualifications after a Bachelor's degree from a recognized university.

In government schools, non-native English speakers will be required to provide an IELTS Score ranging from 6.0 - 7.5 depending on the subject they are applying for. Employments in government schools may require the applicant to hold a full driving license.

**Experience:** Minimum 2 years teaching experience.

**Recruiters:** There are many Indian entrepreneurs who have established educational institutions in GCC countries. The Government Schools and private schools accept applications for General Primary / Elementary teachers/ Middle School/Secondary Schools across the GCC countries.

**Saudi Arabia:** Al Khaleej Training and Education Company, Ma'arif For Education and Training, King Abdulaziz University College, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals College, Saud International School School, Advanced Learning Company.

**UAE:** GEMS Education, Fortes Education, Taaleem, Indian High School School, Innoventures Education, Kings Dubai, Repton School, Emirates International School, Aldar Academies.

**Oman:** Azzan bin Qais International School, Dhofar University, Indian School Muscat, National Training Institute LLC, Sohar University, and Technical and Administrative Training Institute LLC.

**Kuwait:** Afaq Educational Co. K.S.C., Educational Holding Group, Al Rayan Holding Co. K.S.C.C, American University of Kuwait, FAWSEC, The British School of Kuwait.



**Qatar:** Al Jazeera Academy School, (Al Muftah) School, Newton International School, Noor Al Khaleej International School, Taleb Group, Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar.

**Bahrain:** Ahlia University, Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance, Hawar International School, Naseem International School, University College of Bahrain.

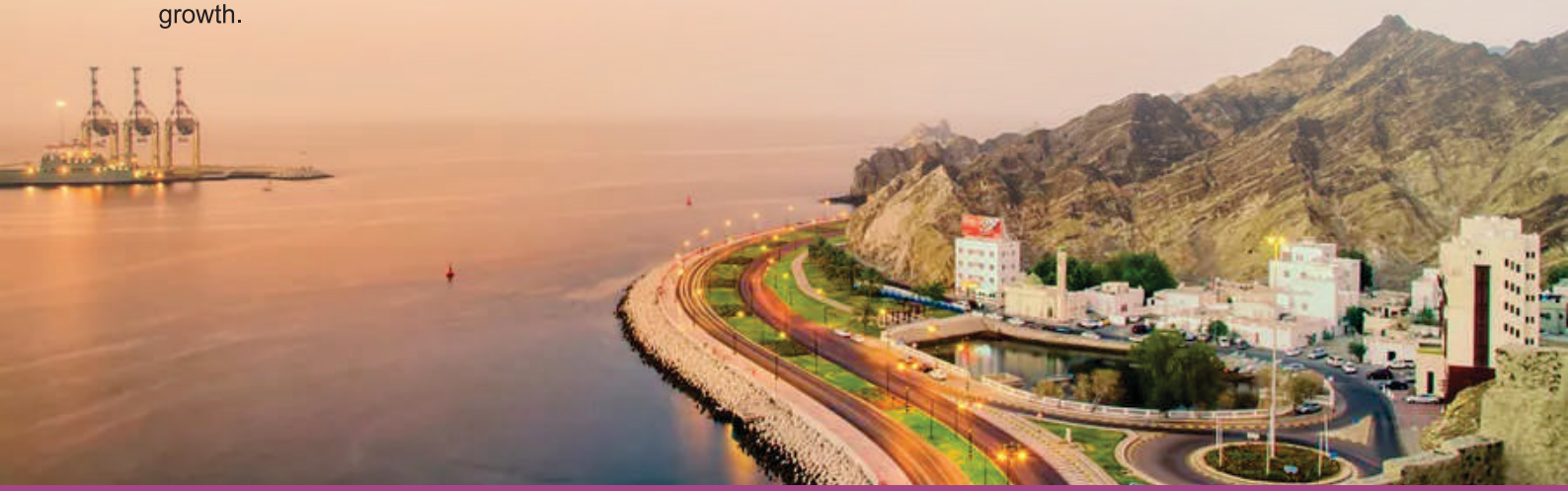
**Other Sectors**

The other sectors which also offer potential employment opportunity are:

i.Environment and Agriculture
ii.Hospitality and Events Management
iii.Leisure, Sport and Tourism
iv.Marketing, Advertising and PR
v.Media and Internet
vi.Property and Construction
vii.Recruitment and HR
viii.Science and Pharmaceuticals
ix.Business, Consulting and Management
x.Creative Arts and Design
xi.Energy and Utilities

## 5. New Skills Sets

It's recommended that applicants acquire cross functional skills with technical skills. There are some commonly accepted new skill sets which enable the applicant in advantage to secure future employments and for career growth.



I.Data analytics-SQL, Excel, Presentation Skills, Data Visualization

ii.Digital literacy-social media, digital marketing, e-commerce market

iii.Entrepreneurship skills-communication, sales, strategy, ability to learn, focus

iv.Financial literacy-budgeting, credit monitoring, savings, investment

v.Foreign language-English and country specific languages

## 6. Stakeholders and Collaboration

It's important that the central government and state government act as facilitators. There is a need for greater collaboration among the governments, which will bring coherence in training, skilling and policy reforms in the education sector with the changing market.

There are efforts that need to be scaled for the collaboration with governments of GCC countries, to strengthen the focus of the education and skilling institutions and partners. There could be various institutional level collaborations with the corporate world to align the technical curriculum and cross functional skills.

The Indian Entrepreneurs who have operations in the GCC countries continue to be strong linkage for recruitment in the countries they operate. There is requirement of creating the Ease of Doing business environment in Kerala which would bring investment.

## 7. Recommendations

### I. Online Database for Employment, Capacity Building and Legal Information

Advance database system enables management of all data centrally, safely and secured, protecting the privacy of the employment seekers and the recruiters. A database streamlines human resource requirements, automates hiring and in process saves time and money. There is an urgent need to have robust database comprising of all recruiters in GCC countries and employment seekers according to various segments like employment profiles, sectors, locations, experience, skills and education status.



The database can also aim to find up-to-date statistics for making comparisons between the GCC countries and identifying employment trends over time. The development of the database will have inter-linkages of employment opportunities with capacity building, country specific database on labour laws, standards and polices.

This requires collating and coordination between various stakeholders in the GCC countries to provide content and join the partnership to make it a reliable database. FICCI can facilitate in the coordination with embassies and industry bodies.

Non Resident Keralites' Affairs Department (NORKA), Government of Kerala can take assistance in developing a world-class database portal that can adapt according to changing technology requirements.

### ii. Employment Portal:

A platform that links recruiters and employment seekers to complete their goals and requirements is urgent. There need to be ease of operation of the portal which will enable employment seekers have user friendly experience. All these factors will ensures transparency in recruitment and abides with the rule of the law. An internet-based data service which brings employment opportunity databases within easy reach of users through a single entry point and with ease of navigation connected to the employment portal.

The portal could be managed in Public Private Partnership where various partners collaborate efficiently to support the functioning of the labour markets in which individuals either offer or demand work. In order for these two sides to virtually interact efficiently, there is a need to design and develop an efficient AI-based job portal powered by the database which serves candidates and recruiters with great results. ‘

## iii. Employment Fairs:

NORKA has an important role to facilitate various employment service that enable face to face interaction of the employment seekers and the recruiters. One such service is the employment fairs, events in which job seekers meet representatives of companies and get access to a series of services, such as databases, counselling on employment or human resource management, information on training offers, and first and foremost information on job vacancies.

Employment fairs allow a great deal of exchange of information between job seekers and potential employers in one single place, benefitting both sides by significantly reducing the cost of both job search and recruitment. In addition, employment fairs enable relevant information on both sides to be gathered. For this reason, employment fairs are a highly effective service. In addition, employment fairs can serve as an incentive to foster decent work conditions.

NORKA can organise the employment fairs across Kerala or GCC countries in coordination with FICCI. The fair will provide booth/stands for matching, entrepreneurial support beyond employment, microfinance for starting business, training opportunities, skill based sessions like 'CV Writing', 'Interview Skills', 'Job Search'.

## iv. Connection and Engagement with Stakeholders

The opportunities for stakeholders to connect frequently about the employments and new skills in the GCC countries are important. This could be through bi-lateral meetings and agreements, diplomatic level negotiations, business meetings, annual employment fairs, exhibitions, conferences, research and publications.

NORKA needs to have pre-arranged linkages to ensure frequent meetings between various stakeholders are organised & constantly update on skilling connect, regularly conduct road shows in collaboration with Indian Embassies & Diplomatic Missions.





### v. Promotion through Social Media and Radio

Traditional approach of print advertising has taken back seat, as social media has become a valuable employment search tool. The employers and recruitment agencies are increasingly using social media for hiring and hiring managers will search for a candidate's social profiles. In the competitive employment search environment, NORKA needs to allocate funds for the social media management for various employment promotion activities to Agencies who can create online linkages between the recruiters and employment seekers. FICCI can assist Norka in this endeavour.

Norka need to have a social media presence and also help the youth to build a professional profile. So social media should be a key part of the employment search strategy. Additionally, the employment services of NORKA can be promoted through the host of private FM channels that are fast gaining influence among the young generation.

### vi. Training for Interview Preparation and Understanding Labour Laws

NORKA needs to provide virtual and physical training opportunities for the employment seekers. Mock interviews will give the youth a platform to prepare, practice and experience first-hand how a real-life job interview feels.

Trainings on country specific labour laws, standards and policies will enable the transition of the worker to be better informed of the legal implications and benefits for the well-being and decent work overseas. It's advisable that aspiring young candidates undergo a mandatory certificated training for few days through their participation in pre-departure orientation program. The program will enable them to ease their transitions into destination countries and empower them to take full advantage of employment abroad.

NORKA can also be the nodal body in Kerala to implement the skill development program, 'Pravasi Kaushal VikasYojana', aimed to enhance the skill sets of potential migrant workers and facilitate overseas employment opportunities, supported by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE). FICCI can assist NORKA on these initiatives.

# Conclusion

Indians comprise a sizeable number of the expatriate population in the GCC countries. The greater numbers of professionals and entrepreneurs have joined the GCC labour market, a majority, estimated at 87 per cent, continue to be employed in unskilled and low-skilled work. There is an urgent need to facilitate skilled labour to contribute to the economy and work with dignity and respect. Kerala's economy depends on the remittances, which require reforms in education & skilling to address the changes caused by the pandemic and technological disruption. We require stakeholders' participation, use of technology and collaboration to provide skilled staff through strong database, user friendly employment portal for recruitment.

After the successful conduct of Overseas Employers Conference in October 2021 jointly organised by NORKA and FICCI, We were approached to come out with feasible solutions as how NORKA and FICCI can collaborate more effectively in connecting Employers and potential job seekers in Kerala with emphasis on potential Skill requirements which matches the job scenario outside India.

FICCI has now come up with a comprehensive report as how to facilitate an eco-system for providing reliable information and capacity building for the youth as they strive to transition towards an independent life through decent work in the GCC countries. The hope of many employment seekers fundamentally depends with the commitment of the governments and the private sector joining forces to provide opportunities needed to help women and men realize their economic and social potential.

FICCI believe that through investment in building an advance database, organising employment fairs for connection, training, legal information and employment portal NORKA can support employment seekers in their quest for employment more effectively.

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Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry
Industry's Voice for Policy Change
Federation House, TansenMarg, New Delhi 110001
Email: ficci@ficci.com
ISO 9001:2015 certified
FB: www.facebook.com/ficciindia
Twitter: www.twitter.com/ficci_india
Blog: blog.ficci.com
www.ficci.in

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KERALA STATE COUNCIL








**FEDERATION OF INDIAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (FICCI)**
**KERALA STATE COUNCIL**

VII Floor, Alpha Plaza Building, K.P Vallon Road, North End
Kadavanthra Junction, Cochin-682020, Kerala
T: +91-484-4058041/42, 4876976
F: +91-484-2310332
Email: kesc@ficci.com
Web: www.ficci.in