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### **Trans-National Migration For Human Development The Dhivehi Diaspora in Kerala**

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**Abstract:** The article examines the human development context of Dhivehi Diaspora in Kerala. The ‘Dhivehi Diaspora’ actually belongs to the community of the people living in Maldives, are those who speak the language Dhivehi. The Maldives generally known as the Maldives Islands is an island nation situated in the Indian Ocean. A large number of people from Maldives migrated to India, especially to Kerala. The main purpose behind this migration is medical services, education and training, business purposes and official trips or holidaying. Majority of the Dhivehi people came to India for various purposes, most commonly for holiday purpose which include medical checkups and treatments. In Kerala, they have got ample opportunities for health services and education for low cost.

**Keywords:** Transnational, Migration, development, diaspora

The ‘Dhivehi Diaspora’ actually belongs to the community of the people living in Maldives, are those who speak the language Dhivehi. The Maldives is a country located in the south Asia, geographically located in the Indian Ocean. Dhivehi is the mother tongue of Maldives. People of Maldives called Maldivians or Dhivehi’s.

The Maldives commonly referred as the Maldives Islands, is an island nation in the Indian Ocean which includes a double chain of twenty-six atolls, oriented north-south, that lie between Minicoy Island (the southernmost part of Lakshadweep, India) and the Chagos reefs. The boundaries of Maldives stand in the Laccadive Sea, which is about 700 kilometers south-west of Sri Lanka and 400 kilometers south-west of India. The Republic of Maldives is an Islamic country. Their language Dhivehi is most closely related to Srilankan language Sinhala. Maldivians adopt their language ‘Dhivehi’ from Arabic, Urdu, and Hindi. The traditional jobs of Maldivians were fishing and coconut cultivation; later it became Tourism, Management, and water sports. The Maldives is popularly known for the tourism industry. In 1966, Maldives became free from British rule. India is popularly known as one of the first countries to accept the independence of Maldives. Since then, both countries have developed close strategic, military, economic and cultural relations. The Maldives has sought to dispose of itself in its support of the Maldives policy and maintain its friendship with India. India is considered as the first country to support the Maldives in all spheres. Srilanka is also the neighboring country to support them.

#### **HISTORY**

Before 500 B.C.E, early settlers of Maldivians were Buddhists, after the arrival of Arabs in 12<sup>th</sup> century; Islam was proclaimed the national religion and consolidated as the sultanate. In 1558 to 1575 Maldives was under the control of Portuguese. Later, the Maldives agreed to become a dependency state of British Government in 1887. In 1932, the Maldives came under the hereditary position of Sultanate. Their first constitution was approved by the Sultan. Maldives achieve full supremacy and joined United Nations in 1965. In 1968, the sultanate becomes smashed and the nation declared to announce The Republic of Maldives. Ibrahim Nazir, who was the authoritarian president since 1968, was removed from office and he was replaced by the more progressive Maumoon Abdul Gayoom in 1978. Gayoom was elected to a sixth five-year term in 2003. (<https://www.infoplease.com/world/countries/maldives>, 2018).

The Republic of Maldives had elected a President and the nation joined to British Common wealth in 1982. It is an organizing member in the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation). Along with Srilanka, Maldives is rated as “high” human development index. The Male’ is the capital city and it is regarded as a center of supporting and monetary life. All major shopping centers and markets are located in the city of Mali and therefore people have to depend on Male for all the needs.

Migration is generally regarded as one of the pull factors for development. India is the major destination especially in Kerala. After their independence, they can free to travel and settled outside the nation. India government made all facilities to the Dhivehi’s. There are only a limited number of hospitals and higher education centers in Maldives. That’s why people depending on other countries for medical treatment and higher education. Trivandrum is the nearest place and easy to travel. The number of Maldivians came to India is increasing every year.

#### **INDIA – MALDIVES RELATIONS**

There is always a bilateral correlation with India and Maldives. India – Maldives affairs have been friendly and close in intentional, fiscal and martial cooperation. India contributed to maintaining protection on

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the atoll realm. Maldives is situated south of India's Lakshadweep Islands in the region of Indian Ocean. Both India and Maldives recognized tactful dealings subsequent to the liberty of Maldives from British rule in 1966. India was the first nation to accept Maldives as an Independent nation. In that case, India and Maldives share close intentional, armed, monetary and artistic ties with each other. India gave support to Maldives' strategy of observance provincial issues and struggles away from themselves, and the later has seen companionship with India as a font of abet while a compensate to Sri Lanka, which is very close to the island nation and it is the major trading collaborator (Ministry of External affairs, 2013).

Maldives opened a fully-fledged High Commission office in New Delhi in November 2004, at that time one of its only fourth embassy in worldwide. Maldives, one and only Consulate home opened in Thiruvananthapuram. (Ministry of external affairs, government of India, 2013)

#### **POLITICAL REALTIONS**

Political relations have been maintained and strengthened by the continuous relations with the premiere levels. Since, the establishment of political affairs, nearly all Prime Ministers of India visited the Maldives. Maldivian President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom and President Mohamed Nasheed made a number of visits to India during their respective Presidency period. The incumbent President was invited Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, for the Oath ceremony. Both India and Maldives always supported each other such as in the case of UN, the Commonwealth, the NAM and the SAARC. (Ministry of external affairs, government of India, 2013)

#### **OPERATION CACTUS'**

On November 3rd, 1988, the defense organization in India in the early hours went into anxious jostle. Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was woken up and informed that India has received a suffering call from the President of Maldives' that his country was under cordon from Sri Lanka. A well-armed and trained force of about 80-200 armed men, mostly pinched from a Sri Lankan Tamil rebellious group, known as the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), infiltrated the Maldivian capital of Malé and took over the control of city. The rebels futile to make the Maldivian President their prisoner, Abdul Gayoom, the president took retreat in the headquarters of the Maldives National Security Service. Gayoom personally requested several countries like India, the United States, Britain, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and 'other' Asian states

#### **COMMERCIAL RELATIONS**

India and Maldives became stronger relations after the success of Operation Cactus. India provides extensive economic support and has participated mutual programs for the growth of infrastructure, health, civil aviation, telecommunications and labor resources. India established a hospital in memory of Indhira Gandhi in Male, the capital city of Maldives. India enlarged telecommunication and air link facilities for the students of Maldives and also increases student's scholarships. In 2006, India's exports to the Maldives were worth Rs.3.84 billion; imports of India from Maldives were less than 60 billion. SBI (State Bank of India) donated more than 500 million dollars for the financial development of the Maldives. Both India and Maldives jointly announced plans to work for fisheries and tuna processing. Kerala and Tamil Nadu have long been linked to the trade with Maldives. (Ministry of external affairs, government of India, 2013)

#### **Bilateral Assistance**

India has been offering support to Maldives in its developmental procedure. They are,

- Indhira Gandhi Memorial Hospital
- Faculty of Engineering Technology
- Technology Adoption Programme in Education Sector in Maldives
- Faculty of Hospitality
- Tourism Studies

#### **OUTBOUND TRAVEL OF MALDIVIANS**

"A large number of people move out of the country every year. The reason for migration is seeking medical services, education and training, business and official trips or holidaying. Many Maldivian people travel abroad for various purposes; most commonly holidays which include medical checkups and treatments. The expenses on these outbound travels are captured in the travel payments component of the balance of payments (BOP) and are one of the largest components of the services payments of the Maldives BOP. As it is not feasible to attain the accurate expenditure of outbound trek, estimates have to be made based on expenditure patterns of Maldivians while out of the country based on surveys. Hence, as part of work carried out to progress the coverage of BOP statistics as well as to improve the estimates made for travel costs, the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA) conducted a survey on "Maldivians Travelling Abroad (MTA)" during the two weeks of December 2011. The aim of the survey was to examine the patterns of Maldivians travelling

in terms of travel destinations, purpose of visit and also to examine the pattern of their spending” (Amdhan, 2014).

#### **DHIVEHI’S IN INDIA**

There are approximately 5000 Maldivian people settled in India. India is the largest habitat of Maldivian’s ever after Srilanka. Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of Kerala, is the major destination for education and health services. A large number of Maldivian students study in different states. Majority of the Maldivians are seeking long term visa for higher studies and medical care.

The relations between the two countries have been patented by sustained friendship, exceptional cooperation and favorable bilateralism. Throughout a history of dependable and close collaboration which at any point of time was free of any mutual irritants, the Maldives’ relations with India are supreme by any other country in the expanse as both the countries have remained powerfully committed to an everlasting friendship. (The embassy of Republic of Maldives, 2018)

#### **HEALTH AND MIGRATION**

In 2008, the constitution of Maldives was reframed with special focus on the decentralization of the health care system and privatization of health services. The main focus was to make certain equitable access to health services and to promote health for all. Currently, Maldives is facing an epidemiological alteration from control and prevention of contagious diseases to non-communicable diseases. The deaths owing to non-transmittable diseases constitute 70% of all deaths. Though, Maldives has achieved 5 out of 8 Millennium progression goals and has set a paradigm for other South East Asian countries (Yatnatti, 2016). Maldives is facing a serious threat with respect to climate change. The rise in sea level has awkward a threat to the people of Maldives, leading to the compulsory migration of citizens to other countries. This intention leads to a state called “climate refugees”, which would lift up conflicts in the local population and also in the countries of relocation” (Yatnatti, 2016).

#### **REASON FOR THE GROWTH OF HEALTH MIGRATION IN KERALA**

Compared to Maldives, Kerala is far ahead in development. Maldivians come to India for different reasons, health being the major one. Maldivians depends Kerala for their health needs. They do not have any better hospitals and medical care in Maldives. In Kerala, not only the basic facilities and infrastructure developments better than in Maldives, but also the cost of treatments is comparatively low. The number of hospitals with accreditation is higher in Kerala. So the people can choose the hospitals they like. One of my respondents pointed out “long waiting time and unaffordable cost” are the major reason for migrating to Kerala. Even in western countries, people have to wait for up to 5 years.

##### **Push factors**

- Long waiting for an appointment
- Unaffordable cost
- Expensive drugs
- Delayed reimbursement on medical insurance claim
- Lower standards of hospitals
- Poor treatments
- High health care cost

##### **Pull factors**

- Lower health care cost and inexpensive drugs
- Well-trained medical staffs and high quality services
- Medical insurance coverage
- NABH accredited hospital facilities
- Reimbursement facilities

#### **7.4. HEALTH SITUATION IN MALDIVES**

The major factor of human development in Maldives is attributed to migration to India. Maldives returning from India after health purposes are left with positive outlooks. Falling infant mortality rates, maternal mortality rates and increased life expectancy are the major improvements of Maldives. Current situation of Maldives is better than that of earlier period.

Due to the climate variations, various kinds of communicable diseases are common in Maldives. The diseases are dengue fever, seasonal influenza and diarrheal diseases etc.

#### **ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE**

- **Frontier Technologies:** - Kerala provided sophisticated technology to support medical diagnostics and procedures. Complicated heart surgeries, cancer care and surgeries, Neurosurgeries, Kidney

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Dialysis etc. requires high end technologies and it can continually improve outcomes, diminish complexity, enable faster healing and reduce the length of hospital stay

- **Specialist Doctors:** -The country has the largest pool of doctors and paramedics in the world - 1.2 million (India H. C., 2016) . In Kerala, almost all hospitals are NABH accredited and provide specialist doctors. With the large number of medical professionals, there is a high level of proficiency and competence in implementing newer technologies, enhancing fresh treatment methods.
- **Cost-effective care:** - Major advantage of health care sector in Kerala provides quality care at an affordable cost. According to MTA survey report, the 3.2 lakhs medical tourists, who visited India in 2015, did not do so for cheap healthcare but for quality healthcare at the affordable cost.
- **Fast track Appointments’:-** Kerala assured rapid and instantaneous consideration for surgeries and all other interventions. Even in western countries, people have to wait for up to 5 years.
- **Strong Private sector:** -In India, private healthcare sector accounts for almost 74 per cent of the country’s total healthcare expenditure. (India H. C., 2016).
- **Traditional medical care:** - Kerala is most prominent of Ayurvedic treatment. Many tourists came to Kerala for Ayurvedic treatments. It reduces the symptoms and restores harmony and balance.
- **State Bank of India:** - SBI play a major role in the health care sector. For a Maldivian visiting in India, SBI provides health and accident insurance and life insurance. These packages are very competitively priced, and offer ample coverage across a range of hospitals and ailments. In collaboration with The Maldives Monetary Authority, State Bank of India also provides US dollars for people travelling for medical purposes. One can even pick up Indian Rupees for sundry expenditure in India(India H. C., 2016)
- **Digital solutions for enhancing health services:** -Digital health is the amalgamation of different technologies- both hardware and software solutions and services. The advantage of digital health care as to prevent, diagnose, treat and manage any health issues or risks, along with heartening and promoting wellbeing. Improving the use of smart devices like wearable smart asthma monitoring, an AI-powered insulin pump etc, computational technologies ( use of health care IT), computational analysis techniques and communication media to help doctors and patients to manage health issues, by on the rise of unified health systems.(India H. C., 2016)
- **Ooredoo Group** is a mobile health clinic, committed to improve people live through mobile technology, which provide free medical treatments in rural and remote areas, allocate nutritional advices and instruct parents and children about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and of disease prevention.
- Ooredoo group is also in Maldives, which allow the Maldivian society to better way, manage and improve their own, and their family’s health, live better, more fruitful lives and improve the entire society through digital health. (India H. C., 2016)

#### **MODE OF TREATMENT**

Maldives citizen generally prefer private hospitals for their treatments. Government hospitals like RCC, SCT are also among the list. They prefer these hospitals primarily because of the better treatment, low cost and ease of travelling. Like in India the number of patients in Maldives is also on the rise. Medical facilities in Maldives have also improved over these years. However for advance treatments like chemotherapy in Cancer, kidney dialysis etc., they prefer to take treatment in India.

#### **MEDICAL TOURISM**

Kerala is the prominent destinations for medical tourism in India. Medical tourism has contributed a significant share in Kerala’s economy. Government has spent large amount to improve basic facilities in medical tourism. Year by year the number of people coming to Kerala for medical tourism is increasing. People from Maldives visit Kerala for medical tourism irrespective of season. Medical tourism is the rapidly growing sector for which people focus on improving spatial beauty and physical features.

Kerala is the top destinations in medical tourism. People from all walks of life make utilize of the facility. Government initiated various measures including visa restrictions to India manage the health tourism sector.

#### **EDUCATION IN KERALA**

Majority of people from Maldives comes to Kerala to get basic or higher education. . The reason behind this is the lack of better education facilities in Maldives. The factors which attracts the Male’ people to Kerala are the availability of better schools, the quality based education and also the good relationship between teachers and students in the teaching – learning process. At present children from lower kindergarten to higher level studies are there in various schools.

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A good number of children from Maldives get admission in high schools. They complete their basic education in high schools. At present, the education system in Kerala and Maldives are almost same. Most children from Maldives use English as their medium. Malayalam is not a compulsory subject for them. They also have the choice of taking an additional language including Hindi, Russian, Sanskrit, and French among them.

#### **ACCESS TO EDUCATION**

Government of India was signed an agreement named Technology Adoption Programme in Education sector with the Government of Maldives in January 2011. The project was completed more than 4000 certifications' benefitting around 2300 Maldivian Teachers and youth across the nation. (Ministry of External affairs, 2013) Indian government provided all facilities in Education sector. Capacity building and skills development is the key factors of Government of India's aiding project to Maldives. (Ministry of External affairs, 2013) Majority of the Maldivian immigrants came to Kerala for education and health to get basic and higher education. They join in management academics for higher studies. Majority of them are mostly choosing the technical courses like IATA, SAP-Logistics, Airline Managements and computerized accounting and so on. The universities in Kerala do not provide such courses, so they are not choosing the universities in Kerala. Otherwise, they do not have any barriers to taking admissions in the Universities of Kerala.

#### **EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

- All Maldivian children will have access quality based education in Kerala.
- Getting admitted to all schools
- Indian government provided child-friendly schools
- All Maldivian children with special needs will identify and given access to suitable edification.
- Quality of provision in schools in Kerala is strong. Many schools have adequate infrastructure facilities and resources.

#### **FINDINGS**

The migration from Maldives to Kerala started in early 90's. Despite of the achievements in the health sector, it is an overwhelming challenge for Maldives. Due to the unfavorable condition and partial and irregular public transport system are unable to get suitable health care. So they choose Kerala, for better health. People of all ages migrate to Kerala for availing health services. Healthcare is the prominent sector of India and Maldives. India has established Indira Gandhi National hospital in Maldives in 1995. Since, there are no medical colleges. Maldivians depends India especially Kerala for their medical aids.

Maldivians follows the same templates of Kerala for developing education and literacy in their state. Education department of Kerala have extended their cooperation of people in Maldives education. The reason behind this is the lack of better education facilities in Maldives. The factors which attracts the Male' people to Kerala are the availability of better schools, the quality based education and also the good relationship between teachers and students in the teaching – learning process. At present children from lower kindergarten to higher level studies are there in various schools.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The Maldives has sought to dispose of itself in its support of the Maldives policy and maintain its friendship with India. India is the first country to support the Maldives in all spheres. Human development of Maldives has improved remarkably, owing to their continuous interaction with India for the past three decades. A number of hospitals and medical facilities two new universities, shopping malls etc. were sprung up in Maldives. Teachers from India often employed in Maldivian schools. Many Indians are employed in Maldives in several sectors like tourism, education, hotel managements, transport services, logistics' etc.

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