

KUWAIT



1. Country Brief with reference with its people

Britain oversaw foreign relations and defence for the ruling Kuwaiti AL-SABAH dynasty from 1899 until independence in 1961. Kuwait was attacked and overrun by Iraq on 2 August 1990. Following several weeks of aerial bombardment, a US-led, UN coalition began a ground assault on 23 February 1991 that liberated Kuwait in four days. Kuwait spent more than \$5 billion to repair oil infrastructure damaged during 1990-91.

Kuwait totally has 17,820 sq km space with it out of which 17,820 sq km is land and 0 sq km of water. It has a total population of 2,418,393 out of which around 70 percent are in the working age group and 30 percent are dependent population. The median age is 25.9 years. The population growth is estimated to be 3.52 percent in 2006, which reflects a return to pre-Gulf crisis immigration of expatriates. The net migration rate is estimated to be 15.66 migrants per thousand populations in the year 2006, which proves that the out-migration is much greater than the in-migration.

The ethnic composition of Kuwait is constituted of 45 percent Kuwaiti, 35 percent other Arabian populations, 9 percent of South Asian, mostly consisting of Indians and Pakistanis, 4 percent Iranian and 7 percent other populations. The main languages spoken are Arabic (official) and English. 85 percent of the Kuwaiti population are Muslims, majority of whom are Sunni Muslims and the rest 15 percent constitute other groups like Christians, Hindu, Parsi and others.

2. Nature and Demographic Profile of Indian Diaspora

Kuwait has a total Indian population of around 5 lakh as per the information received from the Indian Embassy at Kuwait (but according to HLC on Indian Diaspora (2001) it was around 3 lakhs). Most of the Indians in Kuwait are NRI's as foreigners do not normally qualify for local citizenship. Only foreign women married to Kuwaiti nationals are the exception to this rule.

It is said, by the HLC Report on Indian Diaspora, that the size of the Indian Diaspora in Kuwait has increase to more then 2,94,000 since the expulsion of Iraqi forces from the country.

Being foreign nationals, they are also not permitted to own a business or purchase immovable property in their own name. Most of the Indians who are engaged in foodstuffs, jewellery, garments and motor parts trading, are well off. However majority are unskilled or semi-skilled workers. As many as 1,20,000 have gone there as domestic servants, a large number of whom are housemaids and governesses working with Kuwaiti families.

3. Issues and Problems related to Indian nationals in Kuwait

1. *Vulnerability of Domestic Workers*: This is the most vulnerable section of the Indian community in Kuwait as this section is not provided security under the labour laws of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour. Many of the domestic workers and housemaids approached the Indian Embassy at Kuwait with their problems, which are mostly related to the adverse working conditions, non-payment of salaries, confiscation of their passports, etc. Their grievances are put under the arrangements worked

out by the Embassy with the Kuwait Union of Domestic Labour Offices (KUDLO).

2. *Labour Issues:* The main labour related problems were related to adverse working conditions, non-payment of salaries, confiscation of passports etc. There are also cases where companies failed to provide return airfares to workers on completion of their contracts.
3. *Attestation of Employment documents:* It is found that a total of 17, 384 worker employment documents were attested by the Embassy of India at Kuwait, which is only 4 percent as compared to the total workers emigrating from India to Kuwait.
4. *Education Related issues:* A major issue faced by the Indian schools in Kuwait related to the procurement of books published by the NCERT. While NCERT does not have any sole distributor, one company, M/s Sakina International Trading Company, brought out a court injunction to not allow any other company or agency to import books into Kuwait for purchase by the Indian schools.
5. *Iraq related issues:* The Government of India imposed a ban on travel of Indian nationals from and through Kuwait to Iraq effective August 2004. the ban had been imposed in view of the prevailing security situation in Iraq and was motivated by the Govt. of India's concern for the safety and security of its nationals. All the companies based in Kuwait, which employ Indian nationals were advised to ensure that in view of the continuing ban, they should refrain from sending Indian nationals to Iraq from and through Kuwait.
6. *Kuwaitisation programme:* Another major point of concern is the aggressive policies of Kuwaitization that would hamper the future migrants in certain fields of work. However, it is found that most of the Indians are blue collar workers and Kuwaitization process is taking place in the white collar workers.
7. *Renewal of Passports:* Many of the passports of the expatriates are remaining pending for renewal from the State Governments in India. Most

of the complaints received are from the states of Jammu and Kashmir and the North Eastern States.

8. *Illegal Migration*: The problem of illegal migration persists from India to Kuwait. Out of the 58,000 employment documents attested in 2005, only 1,194 were housemaids and domestic servants. It would mean that many of the domestic servants and housemaids are coming through the informal channels.

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4. Diaspora Associations

Cultural associations registered with Embassy of India, Kuwait

- Airways Malayalee Cultural Organisation (AMCO)
 - Alumni Association of St. Berchman's College (AASBCO) Kuwait Chapter
 - Alumni Association NCE Bengal & Jadavpur University
 - Alumni Association of St. Thomas College (AASTCOS)
 - AMMA, Kuwait
 - Anjuman-e-Burhani Dawoodi Bohra Jamaat
 - Ananthapuri Association
 - Arihant Social Group
 - Arpan
 - Arsha Vidya Bharthi (AVB)
 - Association of Indian Professionals
 - Association of Indian School Ex-Students (ISK)
 - Association of Mar Ivanois College Old Students (AMICOS)
 - Bengali Cultural Society, Kuwait
 - Bharat Samskara Kendra (BHASKAR)
 - BHARAT, Kuwait
 - Bharathi Kalai Mandran
 - Bochasawasi Akshar Purushottam Sanstha (BAPS), Kuwait
 - Buntara Sangha – Kuwait
 - C.M. Stephen Cultural Centre
 - Chalanam Theatres
 - Chennerkara Overseas Forum (COFK)
 - Children Arts Group
 - College of Engineering Thiruvananthapuram Alumni Association (CETAA)
 - Creative Indians Association, Kuwait
 - Crown Plaza Investors Association – Kuwait (CPIA)
 - Cultural & Recreational Club of Chinchinim, Kuwait
 - Devotional Associates of Yogeshwar
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- Events India
 - Fankaar Arts
 - Federation of Indian Muslim Associations (FIMA), Kuwait
 - Florence Nightingale Cultural Association
 - Friday Forum
 - Friends of Kannur Kuwait Expatriates Association (FOKE)
 - Friends of Kuwait
 - Frontliners
 - Furus Welfare Society
 - Gayatri Arts
 - Goan Overseas Association
 - Goan Welfare Society
 - Gulf Malayalee Welfare Association
 - Gurudwara Committee
 - HITECH India, Kuwait
 - Indian Arts Circle
 - Indian Business Council, Kuwait
 - Indian Citizen's Committee
 - Indian Doctors Forum
 - Indian Islahi Centre - Kuwait
 - Indian Muslim Welfare Association
 - Indian Overseas Congress, Kuwait
 - Indian Society of Aviation Staff
 - Indian Sports & Cultural Association
 - Indian Women's Association
 - Indian Women's League
 - Indo Arab Socio-Cultural Organisation (IASCO)
 - Institute of Chartered Accountants of India – Kuwait Chapter
 - Institution of Engineer (India)-Kuwait Chapter
 - Jyothy Arts and Cultural Association
 - Kalanjali
 - Karuna
 - Kayamkulam NRIs-Kuwait
 - Kerala Art Lovers Association (KALA)
 - Kerala Arts & Literature Promoting Association of Kuwait (KALPAK)
 - Kerala Association Kuwait
 - Kerala Deseeya Vedi
 - Kerala Islamic Group
 - Konkani Heritage, Kuwait
 - Kottayam Association
 - Kurunji Venkataraman Gowda College of Engineering Alumni Association, Kuwait
 - Kuwait Canara Welfare Association (KCWA)
 - Kuwait Dramatic Society
 - Kuwait Engineers Forum
 - Kuwait India Business Council
 - Kuwait Indian Cultural Congress (KICC)
 - Kuwait Indian Football Federation
 - Kuwait Kannada Koota
 - Kuwait Kerala Muslim Cultural Centre (KKMCC)
 - Kuwait Kerala Muslim Association (KKMA)
 - Kuwait Malankara Rite Movement
 - Kuwait Malayali Cultural Congress
 - Kuwait Orissa Association

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- Kuwait Tamil Sangam
 - Kuwait Zoroastrian Association
 - Law Graduates Forum
 - M.A. College of Engineering Alumni Association (MACE)
 - Maharashtra Mandal
 - Maurya Kala Parisar
 - Mar Gregorios Movement (MGM) Cultural Association
 - Muslim Educational Society (MES)
 - National Cultural Congress
 - National Forum
 - National Service Society
 - Navathara
 - NRI Club 9
 - NRI Investors Forum
 - NRI Welfare Association
 - Overseas Malayalee Welfare Association
 - Palaikuyilgal Tamil Poets Forum - Kuwait
 - Pathanamthitta Association
 - Pathanamthitta Catholicate College Alumni Association – Kuwait Chapter
 - Pravasee Deseeya Congress
 - Pulari Arts & Cultural Association
 - Punjab Sports and Welfare Association
 - Rajiv Gandhi Awards Committee
 - Ranny Pravasi Sangam - Kuwait
 - Samarpan
 - Samskrithi Kuwait
 - Samudra Arts International
 - Santhwanam
 - Saradhi Association
 - Satkar
 - Shanthi Association
 - Shristi Fine Arts
 - Sindhi Association of Indians
 - Society for Telugu Overseas Employees, Kuwait
 - South Indian Cultural Society
 - Sur Sadhana
 - Syro Malabar Cultural Association (SMCA)
 - Tamil Nadu Engineers Forum
 - Tamil Nadu Muslim Cultural Association – Kuwait (TMCA)
 - Technical Staff Association of Kuwait (TASK)
 - Telugu Kala Samithi
 - THANIMA (the Human and Nostalgic Interaction of Malayalees Abroad)
 - The Basil Arts
 - The Indian Community School Parents' Association
 - The Indian Dental Association of Kuwait
 - The Indian Football Referees' Association, Kuwait
 - Tulu Koota Kuwait
 - Union of NRI Investors for Tourism and Education (UNITE)
 - Upasana
 - UPKAR (Uttar Pradesh Kalatmak Rangmanch)
 - Vanitha Vedi - Kuwait

5. Bilateral Relations/Agreement between India and Kuwait

India and Kuwait continue to enjoy traditional friendly relations. Geographical proximity, historical trade links, cultural affinities and presence of a large number of Indian expatriates have all continued to sustain and nurture the longstanding relationship over the years. India has been a natural trading partner and a destination for higher learning. Until 1961, the Indian rupee was legal tender in Kuwait.

Kuwait and India have cooperation in the field of Science and Technology and the two apex bodies in the field of Science and Technology, i.e. Kuwait Institute of Scientific Research and Indian Council for Scientific and Industrial Research have been exchanging views and have been cooperating in conducting higher researches. A number of Indian scientists/researchers are working with the Kuwait Institute of Scientific Research and other such organisations. They have a protocol for cooperation which was signed in 1995 and has been continuing. They have a joint committee which identifies various areas for technical cooperation such as oil refining industry, energy optimization in refining and refrigeration industries, periodical seminars, symposia etc.

Cultural Exchange Programme between India and Kuwait is in the final stages and is likely to be signed in the near future which will give further boost to India-Kuwait Cultural relations.

There are about a dozen Indian schools in Kuwait affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi. They are all well established and cater to the needs of the large Indian community residing in Kuwait. There are about 4.52 lakh Indians staying and working in Kuwait whose presence, in itself, plays a positive role in fostering India-Kuwait relations. Amongst them are old established families of Indian businessmen who have flourishing trade relations with Kuwait.