

QATAR



1. Country Brief with reference with its people

Ruled by the al-Thani family since the mid-1800s, Qatar transformed itself from a poor British protectorate noted mainly for pearling into an independent state with significant oil and natural gas revenues. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Qatari economy was crippled by a continuous siphoning off of petroleum revenues by the amir, who had ruled the country since 1972. His son, the current Amir HAMAD bin Khalifa al-Thani, overthrew him in a bloodless coup in 1995. In 2001, Qatar resolved its longstanding border disputes with both Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Oil and natural gas revenues enable Qatar to have one of the highest per capita incomes in the world.

Qatar totally has 11,437 sq km space with it out of which 11,437 sq km is land and 0 sq km of water. It has a total population of 885,359 out of which 73 percent are in the working age group and 27 percent are dependent population. The median age is 31.7 years. The population growth is estimated to be 2.5 percent in 2006. The net migration rate is estimated to be 14.2 migrants per thousand populations in the year 2006, which proves that the out-migration is very high than that of the in-migration.

The ethnic composition of the Qatar is constituted of - Arab 40 percent, Indian 18 percent, Pakistani 18 percent, Iranian 10 percent, and others 14 percent. The main language spoken is Arabic and English is generally used as second language. Qatar is an Islamic country with 95 percent of Muslim population.

2. Nature and Demographic Profile of Indian Diaspora

Qatar has been a late starter in the commercial exploitation of its oil, as also in commencing its infrastructure and other development work with the help of labour and expertise from abroad. But the situation underwent a drastic change by the 1980's. Presently, Qatar has a huge Indian population which comes around 2 lakhs (Indian Embassy, 2006). Most of the local establishment, whether governmental, business or industrial, prefer to employ Indians in various capacities.

A majority of the Indian population in Qatar are engaged in unskilled and semi-skilled work, which means that it may be considered as belonging to the low or middle income-earning group (HLC Report). Indian professionals constitute a small but important component of the Indian community in Qatar. The Institution of Engineers, Indian Medical Association and the Institution of Chartered Accountants maintain active chapters in Qatar, with an expanding membership and on-going activities. In addition, there are a number of specialists working in other fields like management, education, pharmacies, computers, etc. As Qatar's economic development accelerates in future, the numbers and involvement of Indians at all levels in Qatar is expected to grow, despite a reduction in visas issued for generalists, labourers, etc.

The Indian community in Qatar enjoys the privilege of running four schools in Doha. The MES Indian School, established in 1974, has 6400 students, while the Ideal Indian School, established in 1985, caters to 4,100 students. The other two recently opened schools are Shantiniketan Indian School and Modern Indian School. The schools follow the Indian Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) syllabus and have pupils from around 20 other countries besides India. They are non-profit self-financing organisations and are considered to be among the best expatriate schools in Qatar. An additional facility for Indian students, known as Al Khor International School - Indian Stream, is run by RasGas as part of their International School in Al Khor

Indians at Qatar, or for that matter, in the Gulf send a huge amount of remittances to India. It is said that the average annual remittance to India by the Indians at Qatar equals or exceeds Qatar's net export earnings from the Gulf

3. Known distinguished Diaspora (to be explored)

4. Concerns and problems of Indian Diaspora

Qatar does not give citizenship to the expatriates which make all the Indians remain Indian citizens. This gives lot of scope for exploitation of the foreign workers. The Indians have registered lot of cases of exploitation by the employers.

Another major threat and problem for the Indians is the recruitment agencies. There are many cases of fraud and extortion by the Recruitment agencies. There is a need to have a check on the recruitment agencies. Many of the housemaids are exploited through the present system of recruitment of domestic workers.

There are also cases of non observance of terms of contracts by employers leading to distress of many Indian workers. Apart from this many of the Indians are vulnerable to neglect, disease, accidents, and unemployment.

Many of the expatriates want their wards to get education in India and they are demanding for quota or facilities to facilitate their demands. Many people find financial and procedural barriers to education in India.

There are also complaints of lack of accessible investment/pension schemes.

5. Diaspora Associations that are affiliated to Indian Cultural Centre (ICC)

- BANGIYA PARISHAD
- CHARISHMA ARTS
- DOHA GOANS SPORTS CLUB
- MANGALORE CRICKET CLUB
- MAHARASHTRA MANDAL
- RAS LAFFAN MALAYALEE SAMAJAM
- ST. BERCHMAN'S AND ASSUMPTION ALUMNI
- TELUGU KALA SAMITHI
- UNITED FRIENDS

6. Bilateral Relations/Agreements

An important dimension of the Indo-Qatari relations is the presence of a large Indian community in Qatar. By virtue of its professionalism, dedication and hard work, the Indian community has acquired a very good reputation in Qatar. The community constitutes a very important asset for the Government of India and, in particular, for the Indian Embassy in Qatar. By its day-to-day interaction with Qatari citizens at every level and in every walk of life, the Indian community provides strong cultural and economic links between India and Qatar and contributes in a very meaningful way to the development of friendship and understanding between the two countries.

Indo-Qatar Labour Agreement: India and Qatar signed a Labour agreement in 1985 with a view to regulate the flow of Indian workforce and to protect the basic interests of labourers from India and their Qatari employers. India was the first non Arab country to enter into a labour contract with Qatar.

According to the labour agreement the sponsors in Qatar are required to execute an employment contract as prescribed indicating, *inter-alia*, salient features like wages and other benefits. The contract is first required to be attested by the Department of Labour, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of the Government of the State of Qatar and is then presented to the Indian Embassy for further attestation. On the basis of such attested contract the sponsor can either arrange recruitment of manpower through the Government of India or its

agent or an agent registered with the Government of India or directly from the market.

In the event of dispute between the employee and the sponsor or in the event of the breach of employment contract, the Department of Labour, Government of the State of Qatar intervene and adjudicate, failing which the case is referred to the Labour Court for a decision.

However, the Indo-Qatar Labour agreement does not cover drivers, cooks, houseboys and housemaids. It is in the interest of these categories of workers to check with this Embassy the bona fides of the prospective sponsor before they proceed to Doha on employment. They also need to sign the employment contract duly attested by the Qatari Labour Department and Indian Embassy in Doha before their travel to Doha. Embassy will not be able to protect effectively the interest of the nationals who travel to Doha for employment with out employment contract and other proper documents.