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# Indian Literature

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## OUR CONTRIBUTORS



## Diasporic Reflections

Reji A.L.

The term "Diaspora" is derived from a Greek word, meaning dispersion. It was used by the Jewish people, denoting their world-wide dispersion outside their homeland, the Land of Israel. In Hebrew it was called *Golah* or *Galut*, meaning "Exile". Migration has been an integral part of human history. In the modern times, political, economic and technological developments have facilitated emigration in response to demands for skills, services, or labour. According to the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Most of the Gulf migration from India took place from the State of Kerala. Gulf Malayalis have been stereotypically portrayed in Malayalam literature and films as nouveau riches who brag about their newly found wealth and their changed social position. Once the Gulf Malayalis started representing themselves through their own works, the stereotypes that they once had been, started crumbling down. These new writings are informed by a consciousness that was sensitive to the lived experience of the migrant population in the Gulf.

While Benjamin's *Aadujeevitham* (Goat Days) and Khadeeja Mumthas's *Barsa* explore the life of Gulf Malayalis with an insider's consciousness, M. Mukundan's *Pravasam* (Exile) is an attempt to re-define nostalgia which is thought to be the essence of life of non-resident Malayalis and to pay respect to hundreds of thousands of Malayalis living as non-resident Keralites in different parts of the world.

Cultures are never static, they evolve through history. The self-conscious constructed nature of living is revealed through migration processes. Cultural reduction transforms the familiar into something strange. Each individual carries with them historical scars in both their body and mind. Cultural





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