

The Unanticipated Consequences of Population Policies in Kuwait

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Abstract:

Economic as well as social factors have led to the creation of a national minority in Kuwait. This study examines some of the unanticipated consequences of the State's policies on population composition. Some policies aimed at increasing fertility rates and encouraging the younger generation to marry earlier did not succeed as rates declined their number. Changes in the citizenship laws also aimed at increasing the number of Kuwaitis who were eligible for naturalization. However, the policies that were meant to reduce dependency ratios among migrants and enforce stricter laws on entry of uneducated labour failed to achieve their goals. The unanticipated consequences have led to a growing migrant population with features that the State did not envisage two decades ago. This paper, examines how manual labour (domestic servants) has increased, Asians have increased at a higher rate than those from arab countries leading to cultural diversity. The causes of the problem of those without nationality or the Stateless *Bedoun* group is also analyzed.

Introduction:

The State of Kuwait is one of the oil rich Arabian Gulf States. It is surrounded by the Arabian Gulf in the east, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on its south and west borders and the Republic of Iraq on the north and northwest border. The total area of Kuwait is 17,818 square kilometers, or approximately 7,000 square miles.

The Al-Sabah family has ruled Kuwait since the early eighteenth century. It was never ruled by a colonial power. In the late nineteenth century, several attempts by the Turks to invade Kuwait, led the Kuwaiti government to appeal to Britain to protect and safeguard its

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sovereignty. Britain had friendly relations with Kuwait due to the trading routes of its major shipping company, the East India Company. In 1904, a treaty was signed between Britain and Kuwait and the first political agent arrived in Kuwait. It remained under British protection till 1961.

It has gained particular prominence in the last three decades, for both its rapid economic growth and its phenomenal population increase. The country has one of the highest per capita incomes in the world. Its transformation from a homogeneous city/state into a rapidly industrializing country was made possible by its huge revenues from a single depletable resource - oil.

However, the availability of enormous capital was not a sufficient condition for economic growth. Labor, too, was needed to turn the wheels of development. Like many other Gulf States, Kuwait had a small and young population: the median age in 1951 was 14 years. The evolving economy opened new job opportunities for which many adult nationals were not fully qualified. Thus, unlike many other developing countries, Kuwait required foreign labor and not foreign capital in order to meet the objectives of its development plans.

Initially, labor was imported from the poorer Arab States, which had large populations (Abella, 1991; Addleton, 1991; Al-Akhrass, 1982; Shah, N. and S. Al-Qudsi, 1989; Birks and Sinclair, 1980). Immigration was encouraged from countries, which shared common characteristics with Kuwait, emphasis being placed on Arab integration and co-operation (Looney, 1992). However, Arab migrants had a propensity to bring dependents. They required social services and this led to added social costs to the country. In 1980, nearly 60 percent of Arab migrants in Kuwait were dependents of workers, compared to 28 percent of Asian migrants (Shah, 1985). The duration of Arabs was also longer, having settled for an average of 18 years compared to 10 years for non-Arab Asians (Shah, 1985). After the exodus of Jordanians and Palestinians during the Gulf War, the share of Arabs

has decreased. This group composed of over 63% of the total population prior to the war in 1990. Asian labor, being cheaper and more skilled in some areas has been increasing over the years. In the census of 1995, Arab migrants were 17% and Asians 26%. But, again the implication of a growing migrant population has led the government to review its policies to try and curb the flow. The changing demographic structure will be discussed in this study along with an analysis of some population policies related to population growth and composition.

In the first Kuwaiti census in 1951, the total population was 206,413. The 1985 Kuwaiti census indicates that the population increased eight-fold in the next three decades, to reach 1,695,128. In 1995, the total population had declined to 1,575,570; the decrease was due to the mass exodus during the invasion of Kuwait in 1990-1991. In most developing countries, population growth is due to relatively high fertility, but in Kuwait, it is the increasing rate of in-migration that is the major factor. Rapid population growth would not have been a major concern of the government if those of Kuwaiti nationality were the majority. However, in virtually every census, the nationals' share in total population has decreased, falling to only 34.6 percent of a total of 2.29 million in 1999.

Aim of the study:

Economic as well as social factors have led to the creation of a national minority in Kuwait. This study described the States's pronatalist policies, which have sought to encourage a rise in Kuwaiti fertility rates through incentives and yet there has been a decline in birth rates of Kuwaitis. Its labour policies, which have attempted to curb the increase in foreign migrants to the country, have had some unanticipated results. Naturalization laws in the last decade have aimed at increasing the share of nationals. Stricter laws were penalizing those without nationality and forcing them to legalize their status or leave the country, but we need to look back into the past to see how

such a situation arose and how earlier policies led to the birth of such a group in Kuwait.

After shedding some light on the demographic features of the population in Kuwait, such as the decline in Kuwaiti birth rates, growth of migrants, occupation distribution, nationality of migrants, etc, some policies that have had an impact on population composition will be discussed.

Policy 1 will shed some light on the share of manual and unskilled labour has increased over the years. Policy 2 will illustrate how the government tried to reduce the dependency ratio but failed. Policy 3 briefly outlines the conditions for naturalization in Kuwait. Finally, Policy 4 and 5 will attempt to analyze the unusual population situation of those without nationality or the *Beidoun* in Kuwait and their status at present.

Methodology:

This paper relied on census data from the Ministry of Planning of Kuwait as well as the analyses of some labour laws from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Various Annual Statistical Abstracts were also a source of data. As this paper is not a field survey, but an analysis of some population policies, secondary data from government sources and reports from government officials in media or those published, were utilized along with past studies in the area.

Demographic Features of the Population

General Population Trends:

In the span of four decades both Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis have rapidly grown, While labour migration was the main factor in the rise of a migrant majority in Kuwait, Kuwaitis increased due to a decline in infant mortality rates and a longer life expectancy at birth due to the availability of free health care and social services. Infant mortality (IMR) for Kuwaitis declined from 65.5/ thousand for males and 47.6 for females in 1965 to 12.8 and 12.2 respectively in 1997 (Shah, 2000,

p.33). Even non-Kuwaitis avail of free medical services and they, too, experienced a decline in IMR from 34 (males) and 27.8 (females) in 1965 to 14.1 and 10.9 respectively in 1997. Life expectancy for Kuwaitis is now 72 which compares favorably with advanced countries (Europe is 73). (Population Reference Bureau, 1998).

However, there has been a continuous decline in the total fertility rate of Kuwaiti women from 6.6 per women in 1980 (Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, p.59) to 4.36 (Shah, 2000). The crude birth rate per thousand dropped from 51 in 1984 to 47 in 1984 (Annual Statistical Abstract, 1988, p. 55) and further declined to 33 (Annual Statistical Abstract, 1999, p. 55). These indicators of a decline in birth rates have raised fears among Kuwaiti officials, who are seeing the national's share of the total population shrinking to a minority.

Kuwait is a Third World country that encourages fertility and has implemented pronatalist policies to encourage large families. For example, working women in the government sector can take leave from work for a year in the first two years after the birth of a child and their place at work is guaranteed. The father receives KD. 50 per month for each child in the family while he is employed in the government sector. The private sector also gives its employees incentives in various forms. Furthermore, a marriage allowance was introduced in the eighties of KD. 2,000 and later raised to KD. 4000 to encourage young Kuwaiti men to marry early. This sum could help towards the dowry he has to give the bride [note: the sum is only given once]. An allowance for those who pay rent is also given by the government and married couples can apply for a house at the housing authority.

In spite of all these incentives and free social services such as health and education, the average annual growth rate has slowed down from 8.7 percent in 1961 to 3.7 in 1980 to 3.3 in 1998 (Population census of Kuwait). It is known in demographic data that women's education has a negative association with fertility (i.e. higher educated women have fewer children). Al-Kazi (1985) conducted a field survey in Kuwait and

found the same correlation. Women's participation in the work force along with higher education is also negatively associated to fertility. Thus, with more Kuwaiti women completing higher education and entering the labour market, quality of life for them and their family leads to a smaller ideal family size.

The growth in the non-Kuwaiti population is due more to migration than high birth rates. In studying birth rates, we can see that earlier in the sixties and seventies, the non-Kuwaitis were more settled in Kuwait with a reasonably high birth rate of 36 per thousand in 1975, which declined to 26.4 per thousand in 1984 (Annual Statistical Abstract, 1986, p. 73) and was only 13.5 per thousand by 1997 (Annual Statistical Abstract, 1998, p. 55). At present, it is only 9.69 (Shah, 2000).

It is not only changes in population growth that are important for national policy planners, but the sex ratio, the age distribution, the presence of various nationalities and the educational and professional status of the population. For example, the very young age structure of Kuwaitis has been a major factor necessitating labour supply from abroad. Furthermore, Kuwaitis have been delaying entry into the labour force till their early twenties, as higher education is free and most nationals avail of this opportunity to enhance their job chances. This trend for continuing education has led to a greater dependence on foreign labour.

Table 1 gives an overview of the growing reliance on non-nationals. Since 1965, Kuwaitis have been a minority in their own country. They comprised 47% of the total in 1965 and further declined to 40% of the total in the census of 1985 before the Iraqi invasion in 1990. In the last census of 1995, Kuwaitis were 41.5%, as large numbers of non-Kuwaitis fled the country during the Gulf War. After Liberation, certain nationalities were not allowed to reenter as their governments had supported the Iraqi regime. But, the rebuilding of Kuwait led to a rapid influx of migrants since extensive damage had

Table 1
Population Distribution by Nationality, 1957-1999

Census Year	Number Kuwaiti	Population		Total	Average annual growth rate		
		Percentage Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti		Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Total
1957	113,622	55.0	92,851	206,473	-	-	-
1961	159,448	49.6	162,173	321,621	8.7	13.7	11.1
1965	220,059	47.1	247,280	467,339	8.1	11.8	10.1
1970	347,396	47.0	391,266	738,662	9.6	9.6	9.6
1975	472,088	47.5	522,749	994,837	6.3	6.0	6.1
1980	565,613	41.7	792,339	1,357,952	3.7	8.7	6.4
1985	681,288	40.1	1,016,013	1,697,301	-	-	-
1995	653,616	41.5	921,954	1,575,570			
1999	812,255	34.6	1,442,699	2,254,954			

Sources: Kuwait Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Bureau, **Population census for 1957 to 1995. Essential Features of the population and Labor Force**, July 2000, Ministry of Planning, Kuwait.

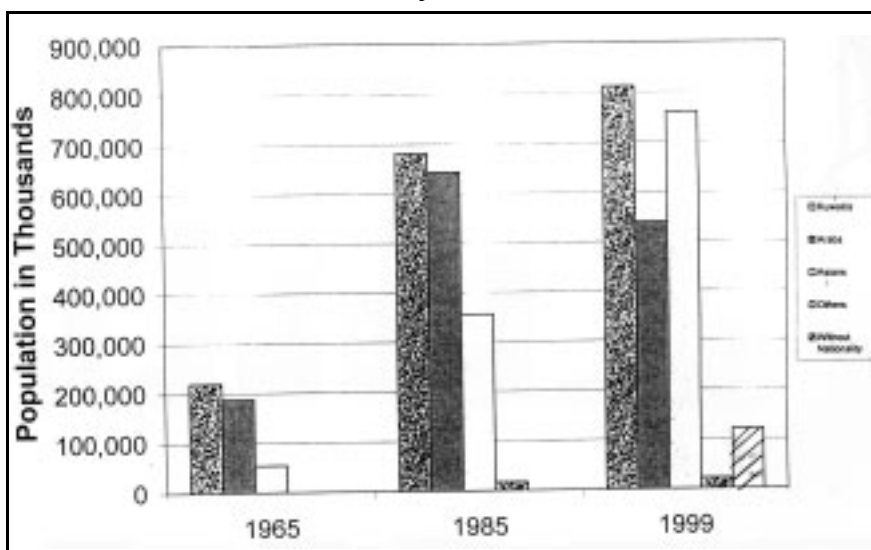
been done to the infrastructure of the country, from roads and electricity to government facilities and business centers. This rebuilding process led to a demand for unskilled and skilled labour. By 1999, Kuwaitis were only 34.6% of the total population. With the need for construction workers, the new labour influx was largely males brought on contractual basis, which led to a further imbalance in the sex ratio. At present the ratio is 2:1 i.e. 205 males for every 100 females among non-Kuwaitis.

Nationality Distribution of Migrants:

Kuwait had maintained an Arab identity inspite of the rapid influx of migrants in the sixties and seventies. Sharing a common language, religion and culture, migrants and nationals interacted as one homogenous group. Till the mid eighties, children of Arab migrants could avail of free education and thus peer groups of Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis had time for bonding in schools among the students. However, Asian labour, being cheaper and less likely to settle for a long period, became a favorable alternative for Kuwaiti

employers. They increased slowly but steadily in the eighties. Fig. 2 indicates that they comprised, 35% of the total non-Kuwaiti population in 1985, while Arabs were the majority (63.5 of non-Kuwaitis), other nationalities were 1.5%. But after the Iraqi invasion, the Jordanian-Palestinian nationality group who had left the country and whose government had shown support for the Iraqi regime were not allowed to reenter. Jordanians & Palestinians were nearly one third of the total population prior to the 1990 war. Thus, in the May, 2001 statistics, the Arab share fell to 33.5% among migrants. The non-Arab migrants (mainly from India, Bangladesh and Philippines) rose to 65%. Fig 1 shows the present. However, not all Asians came without families and Asian schools were established to cater to these group.

Figure 1
Nationality Distribution



Non-Arab migrants face numerous obstacles in order to assimilate into Kuwaiti society. The first and foremost is the language barrier. Though Kuwait is bilingual and English is understood everywhere, it poses a problem in employment in the government sector as government offices communicate in Arabic officially.

Furthermore *de-skilling* has also occurred among migrants. Stahl (1981) describes this as a process whereby migrant workers, because of their willingness to take lower skilled jobs for higher monetary return, actually lose previously held skills). Some Filipino college graduates work as domestics and professionals are performing clerical jobs (Shah, 1994). Religion and culture is also different even though religious tolerance allows freedom of practice and worship for non-Muslims. However, when Islamic religious feasts are celebrated in society at large, these non-Muslim migrant groups feel isolated or alienated. Christians may assimilate more easily than the other religions as their feasts are observed openly and churches give them a sense of identity with Arab Christians. Social Scientists have observed that factors such as the temporariness of migration, low degree of social integration between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis can lead to an absence of social cohesion within society and a sense of alienation among migrants (Al-Akhrass, 1982 and Nagi, 1983).

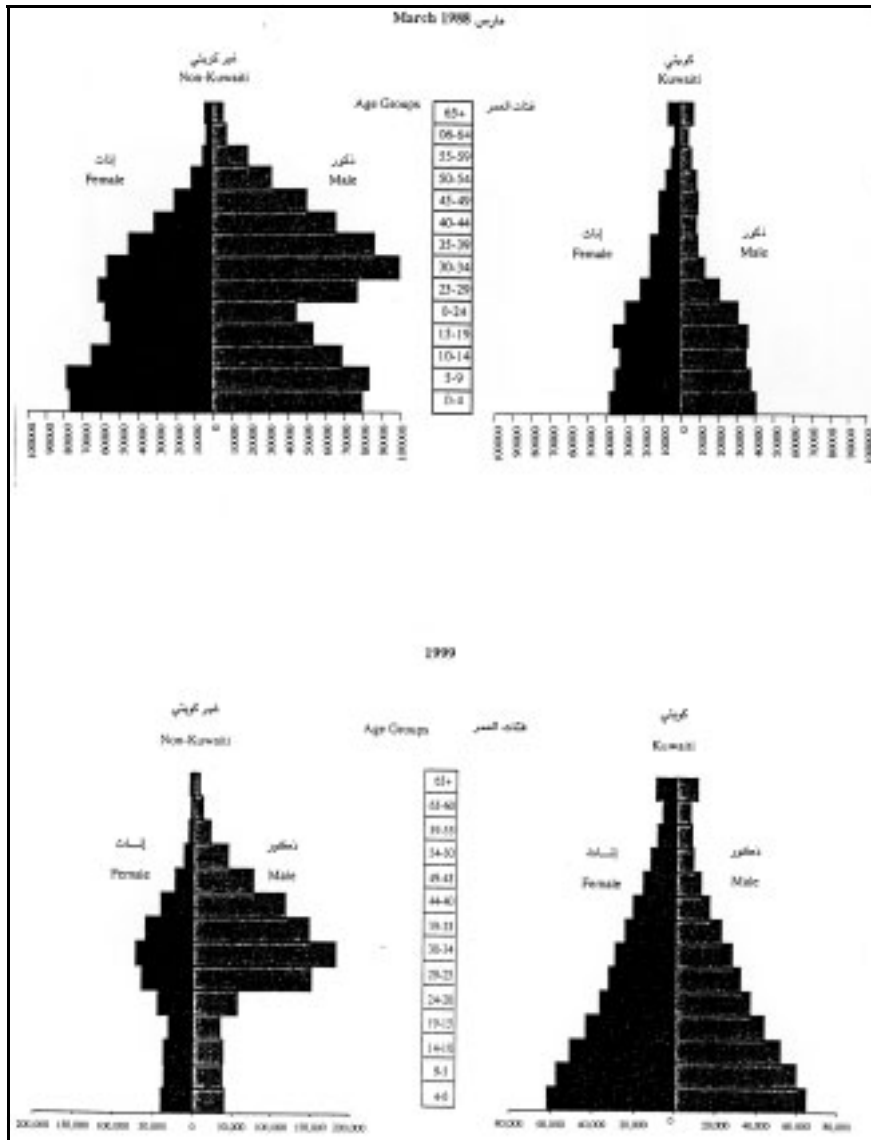
Age Distribution of the Population:

In 1989, 44.5% of Kuwaitis were below 15 years of age and 52% were between the ages of 15-59 years. Many non-Kuwaiti families had also settled in Kuwait 30% of the migrants were below 15 years of age and 68% were in 15-59 years age group.

At present, the non-Kuwaiti age distribution has undergone a significant change, so that only 16% are below 15 years of age and 82% are between 15-59 years of age. The government has been strictly enforcing 65 years as the retirement age whether in the government or Private Sector. Labour permits are not renewed after this age, except in the case of those with exceptional skills. Thus, we see that there are less children and aged among non-Kuwaitis as is normally seen among settled migrant communities.

Figure 2 shows the decrease in children among the migrant population. Data for 1989 and 1999 is used as the former was the last statistic before the Gulf War, and 1999 is the latest.

Figure 2
Age Pyramid by Nationality



Source: Annual Statistical Abstract, 1999, Ministry of Planning, Kuwait.

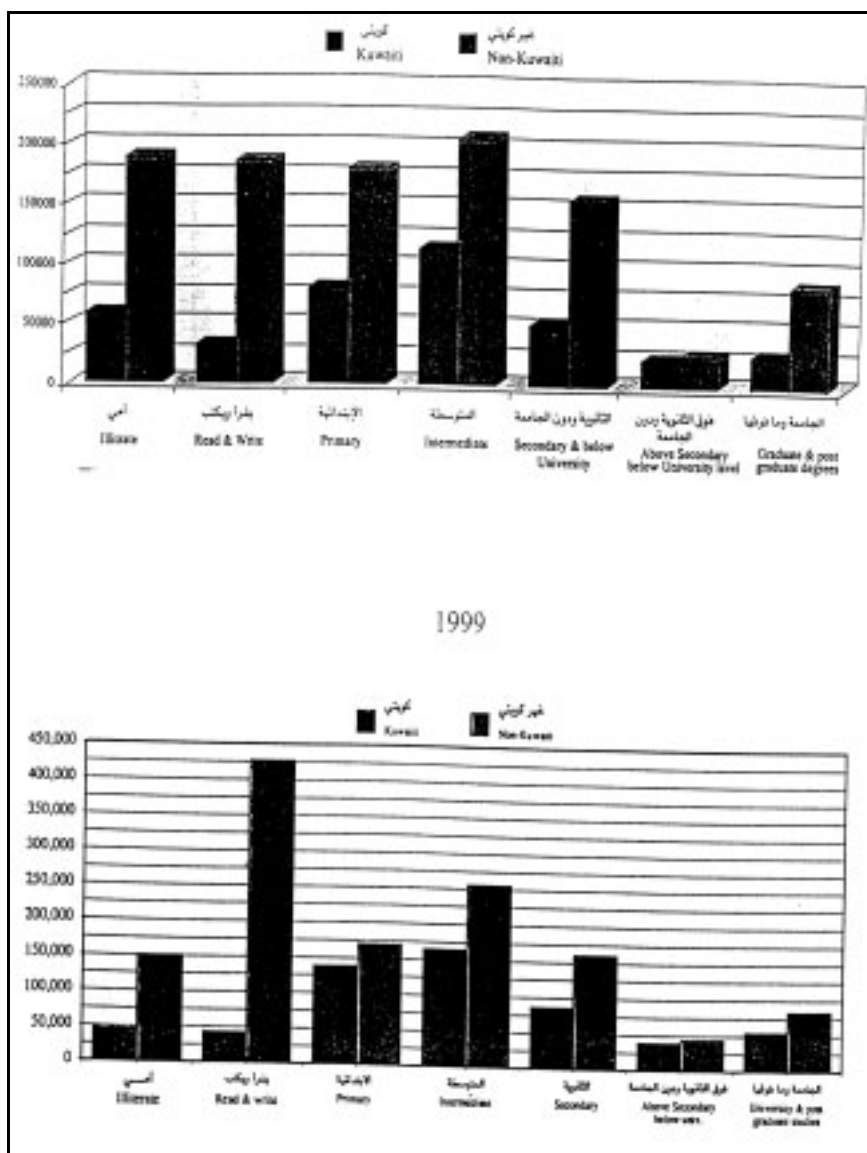
Educational Attainment of the Labour Force:

Kuwaitis have greatly improved their educational levels in the last three decades. Half of the population was illiterate in 1965 when schools were being built and free education was being introduced, while less than one percent had university degrees. However, by 1995, illiteracy had dropped to 10% which compares favorably even with advanced countries. 9% percent of Kuwaitis have University degrees & above at present, which emphasizes a point made earlier that this desire to acquire University degrees has been a factor delaying their labor force participation. Among non-Kuwaitis, it is noticed that the uneducated comprised nearly 54.7% of the migrant labour force in 1995. This is an increase from 1985, when uneducated migrant labour equaled 44%, their share in the higher educated ranks has not improved significantly, so that only 11% have University degrees, which is a decline from 12.3% in 1985. A possible explanation for the high proportion of uneducated labour is the construction boom after the liberation of Kuwait in 1991 and an increase in domestic servants. Figure 3 compares the latest statistics for total non-Kuwaiti population, from December 1999 with 1988 where 49% of non-Kuwaitis have no education while 27 have only primary or basic education. This data indicates that the new stream of migration in the nineties was not similar to the eighties when professionals and technical labor were prominent among migrants. Now, marginal workers are a majority being largely males, employed in construction and menial work.

Occupational Distribution of Migrants:

In the seventies, large proportions of the migrants were professionals and technical workers, who had come to manage the hospitals and schools that had been established (16% of non-Kuwaiti labour force) by the 1995 census, they were 15.5%. They were educated, white-collar workers who came with their families and merged into Kuwaiti society. Middle-income families can live in residential areas with Kuwaitis and therefore assimilation is easy. The production and

Figure 3
Education Status of Population by Nationality (10 years and over) 1988



Source: Annual Statistical Abstract, 1999. Ministry of Planning, State of Kuwait. P.36-37.

Table 2
May, 2001 Residence Permits by Nationality

Countries	Number	Percent of Total Domestic Labor	Percent Dependents
India	300,190	38,5	12,7
Bangladesh	232,050	32,2	2,5
Sri Lanka	149,628	86,5	1,4
Philippine	49,215	57,8	7,0
Indonesia	38,177	98,0	0,4
Iran	56,875	1,4	8,0
Pakistan	86,722	6,3	22,9
Other Asians	24,605	-	-
Total Non-Arab	789,497		
Asians	(65%)		
Egyptians	232,050	1	24,7
Syrian	88,239	0,6	46,2
Lebanon	31,205	-	54,1
Jordan	28,514	-	61,0
Other Arab	26,031	-	-
Total Arabs	406,037		
	(33,5%)		
Other Countries	19,026		
	(1,5)		
Total Non-Kuwaitis	1,214,560		
	(100%)		

Source: Calculated from Data received from Migration affairs, Ministry of Interior, Kuwait, May 2001.

related skilled workers were 42.6% of the 1975 non-Kuwaiti labour force (Al-Kazi, 1985). In 1995 census, they constituted 13.5% only and manual, unskilled workers were the majority (65%). They were mainly contractual workers employed in cleaning services of public facilities etc. They either lived in labour camps where they were segregated from the rest of society, so they could not assimilate like the earlier streams of migrants. They also tend to live in collective housing for bachelors that are permitted in certain areas of Kuwait and this further increased their sense of alienation from the mainstream of society.

Migration Policy concerning Domestic Servant:

As the standard of living improved in Kuwait, Kuwaiti families began to employ more servants than before. Prior to the sixties, the average family in Kuwait employed one servant, usually from Oman. The joint family system helped in sharing household chores among the younger women. As the urbanization of Kuwait led to the development of new residential areas and the State distributed houses (villas) or gave loans to middle income and fixed income families, the nuclear family became the norm in Kuwait. The numbers of members in a family were fewer than before and women's participation in the labour force increased. To keep up with the needs of changing times, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour made a law to regulate the entry of domestic servants into the country. Policy (5) limits the number of entry permits for servant on the following conditions: (a) Those families whose members do not exceed five persons are allowed 3 servants (b) Those families whose members exceed five members may bring 4 servants.

This policy has led to an influx of servants to Kuwait as cooks, maids and drivers. Most of these migrants (Over 90%) come from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the Philippines. Thus, these servants are a major cause of the increase in Asian migrants. 38.5% of the Indian migrants are domestic servants, 32% of the Bangladeshis, 86.5% of Sri-Lankans, 58% of Filipinos and 98% of Indonesians are also domestic servants [See Table 2]. Pakistan is an exception as most workers are male manual or skilled workers in the construction sector and this is also the case for Iranians. However, often families do not actually employ the total number allowed to them. Some Kuwaitis make visas for wives of other workers whose salary does not permit them to apply for the entry of their dependents. Some Kuwaitis take a fee to make the visa, which is not officially allowed and they are then the sponsor or *kafil* of the migrant. The *kafil* or sponsor is a new social role that emerged essentially to encourage Gulf nationals to gain entrepreneurial skills, by being partners with migrants in business

ventures (Ibrahim, 1982, p.31). However, most *kafils* are only sleeping partners or a means of legal entry for migrants.

Though the decree stated above sets limits on the number of servants allowed to enter the country, there is no control or check made on the families to see if the servants on the Kuwaiti sponsor's record are really employed by him. The number of domestic servants is not stated separately in census data but we know that they are implied in the labour force data, as those in the family sector (the other sectors are Public, Private and Joint i.e.: the State is a partner). In population data collected by the Ministry of Planning, these workers comprised 23.3% of the non-Kuwaiti labour force in June, 1996, of whom 66% were uneducated (Essential Features of the Population and Labour Force, 1996, p. 42). In a country that is a minority in its own land, these uneducated migrants are further burdening the social service such as health care, electricity and water. These marginal workers are not really contributing to the development process. In fact, there have been studies on the negative impact of these migrants' cultures on native children's language acquisition and socialization (Al-Omar et al., 1987). A point made earlier needs to be clarified here is that some women arrive in Kuwait with their visa stating that their purpose is domestic work but it is only a guise used to facilitate her joining her husband.

Migration Policy concerning dependents wishing to join families already residing in Kuwait:

Another problem faced by Kuwait in the seventies was the high dependence ratio of non-Kuwaiti. Since 1980, the government tried to put constraints on the migrant society through various policies. But, migrants with the help of Kuwaiti friends often took advantage of the loopholes in the policy. Two policies will be discussed that were meant to deter the migrants from bringing their families to Kuwait.

In 1985, when Arab migrants were a majority, the dependency ratio was 89 per 100 non-Kuwaitis in the labour force. The figure was

significantly lower than in 1980, when it was 108 per 100. The government was elated that its policy of bringing contractual male workers was achieving its goals, but the most recent data of 1996, shows that it is 143 per 100 non-Kuwaitis in the labour force. (Essential Features of the Population and Labour Force, 1996. p. 1 & 42).

The policy aimed at discouraging the entry of wives and families was introduced on March 24, 1985. The Ministry of Social Affairs & Labour announced that any non-Kuwaiti applying for a visa for his family (wife and three children) must present an official statement of his salary which must not be less than 450 K.D. a month (i.e. US\$ 1456.00) if he is employed in the government sector and 650 K.D. per month if employed in the Private Sector (i.e. US\$ 2103) plus an annual fee of 100 K.D. per dependent. In 1992, a Ministry decree further elaborated on the earlier policy that if the number of children are more than three, the guardian should pay an annual fee of 100 K.D. per additional dependent (for those employed in the government sector) and 200 K.D. for those employed in the Private Sector. The discrimination in wages required is because government employees receive certain benefits such as free education for their children, if the parents are professional or administrative workers, as well as housing in some cases, therefore wages are lower in the government sector. This policy was not put into full effect as there was opposition from the general public and members of Parliament to the annual fees required from the dependents and the latter half of the decree was shelved till further notice. However, the Ministry Decree No. 2/1992 led to the continuation of what migrants had done before i.e. inflate salary statements with the cooperation of employers in the private sector and thereby bring their dependents to Kuwait. Kuwait is tax-free and the government does not check on actual wages unless the employee lodges a complaint with the Ministry of Social Affairs & Labour. Thus, the flow of migrant dependents continued unhindered by this policy.

Another policy that was aimed to curb the flow of dependent

children was the restriction on the admission of non-Kuwaiti children into government schools. Prior to the Gulf War in 1990, non-Kuwaitis equaled Kuwaitis in government schools. In 1985-86, Kuwaitis were 50.9% of all students in government school (Annual Statistical Abstract, 1986, p. 330). After 1987, only those in certain categories could join government schools (those already enrolled could complete high school regardless of the new policy).

These categories are (a) children from the Gulf States; (b) children of Kuwaiti mothers married to non-Kuwaitis; (c) children of diplomatic corps; (d) children of martyrs and Prisoners of Wars who are non-Kuwaitis, (e) children of professionals in the Education Ministry, Institute of Applied Education and Kuwait University and Special Education Institute; (f) children of researchers in the Kuwait Institute of Scientific Research.

This policy led to the establishment of numerous Private Schools - Arabic and non-Arabic. Those Arabs who could not enter government schools in the eighties had to enroll in private Arabic schools. The Ministry of Education tried to help reduce the economic burden of education on these migrants by helping school management through loaned land and buildings for school premises. In addition, 50 percent of the students' fees were borne by the government, who paid to the school management in order to keep the fees low.

Non-Arabic schools are not given government financial aid, but many companies in the private sector offer to bear the expenses of the employees' children's education. In Kuwait, at present there are 66 private Arabic Schools of which (Kuwaiti students are only 8%). Foreign schools especially English medium are 50 in number (22.6% of the students are Kuwaitis). The establishment of Private schools led to further increase in migrants, as the staff is non-Kuwaiti.

Policies aimed at increasing the growth

Citizenship and Naturalization:

Nationality or citizenship laws are considered the most important laws of a country and the impact of these laws can have far reaching effects on the country. It is the dividing factor between nationals and non-nationals. Laws differ in each country. In the United States, being born in the country, gives the individual a right to US citizenship. In Kuwait, birth is not a right to citizenship unless other criteria apply.

The citizenship law by Amiri Decree was put into effect in 1959. Those who lived in Kuwait prior to 1920 till 1959 without leaving the country are the original Kuwaitis. Children of Kuwaiti fathers and children who are illegitimate and have no known parents, children of Kuwaiti women, who are divorced or widowed have a right to citizenship. Non-Kuwaitis who have rendered valuable service to the country are chosen every five years for citizenship. Arabs residing in Kuwait continuously, since 1945 or non-Arabs residing in Kuwait since 1930 are also eligible including their wives and minor children. A non-Kuwaiti woman married to Kuwaitis for 15 years, and if the husband expires and has children from him is eligible even if the marriage lasts for a shorter period.

Previously, if citizenship was granted to the father and he had children above 18 years, they were not eligible to be granted citizenship. In early June 1998 this law was rectified and Law No. 11 for the year 1998 changed the 1959 law. All children who at the time of their parents being granted citizenship prior to 1998 were above 18 years of age are now eligible for Kuwaiti nationality. If the father (i.e. the persons now eligible) has already expired, his male children can avail of the nationality. This rectifies flaws present earlier, in which some children became Kuwaitis while other siblings who were adults were not eligible. However, the citizenship laws are still strict. In the eighties, number of persons granted naturalization was between 15,000 and 17,000 per year. After liberation of Kuwait in 1992, 111,712 persons

were naturalized (Annual Statistical Abstract, 1998, p. 49) 163,984 in 1993 and 42,900 in 1994. No official explanation is available to explain this high number but the changes in the eligibility for naturalization discussed earlier may be possible reasons. Non-Kuwaiti martyrs and prisoners of war qualified for citizenship with their families. 1993 show a higher number of naturalization 163,984 cases, but for security purposes the reasons are not known. In 1994, only 42,900 were granted nationality and in 1995 the number dropped to 18,746. Thus, naturalization is not a significant factor in increasing the Kuwaiti population. In fact, the committee entrusted with deciding who is eligible for Kuwaiti nationality only meets every four or five years.

Policies Concerning Fertility and the Family

Fertility and the family:

The Government has a policy to boost fertility rates among the national population. Government objectives are to improve the status of women and create conditions conducive to child-birth and parenting. The Government provides cash benefits by means of child allowances, maternity benefits and housing subsidies to families with a male Kuwaiti in government service. Since 1980, Kuwaitis marrying for the first time have been entitled to a marriage allowance. In 1986 the Government required both the public and the private sector to grant paid leave to employees marrying for the first time. The provision of family planning services is not considered a priority. Access to contraception is permitted, but without government support for information or access to methods. Abortion and sterilization are permitted only for medical or health reasons. In 1984, the highest religious authority in Kuwait gave approval to test-tube fertilization for married couples. However, between 1970 and 1980, the total fertility rate fell from 7.2% Kuwaiti woman to 6.6 per Kuwaiti woman (Kuwait, Ministry of Planning, 1985; p. 65). It further declined to 5.3

per Kuwaiti woman in 1999 (derived from Essential Features of the Population & Labour Force in 31-12-99, p. 19). Even though marriage rates have not significantly declined and age at marriage has remained similar over this period, Kuwaiti couples are having fewer children. A major factor affecting this trend to small families could be the better education of woman and the spacing of children (Al-Kazi, 1988).

The Problem of Stateless persons or those without nationality, in Kuwait:

The persons in Kuwait, who have no legal documents to prove their nationality has been a cause of political and social concern for two decades. According to Dr. Rasheed Al-Onaizi this group could be divided into two - de jure stateless persons (those who originally came to Kuwait with no legal documents) and de facto stateless persons (those who concealed their original documents and proclaimed themselves stateless) [Al-Onaizi, 1994. p. 6-7]. The problem of this group of non-Kuwaiti arose due to a flaw in the 1959 law of Residency in Kuwait. Law No. 17 of 1959 states that any migrant entering Kuwait should hold a valid passport and visa in order to remain in Kuwait. However, article 25 in the same Law excluded member of tribes and clans, who could enter the Kuwaiti land borders freely with no documents in order to lead their sedentary lives and accomplish their needs” (Al-Onaizi). These people used to cross Kuwaiti borders to sell sheep, sheep products such as wool, milk, butter, etc. and buy other products in return. The exemption of this group led to the free entry and settlement of these people within Kuwaiti borders.

In the sixties, the Kuwaiti army and the National guards allowed volunteers from this group of stateless people or those belonging to clans to join forces without procuring legal documents. The number of volunteers increased as government officials stated that those in the armed Forces could later obtain citizenship (Al-Awadhi, 1996. p. 12). The number of stateless persons began to multiply rapidly as many people saw the benefits of concealing their real nationalities and

proclaiming themselves members of a certain clan. As none could prove the falsity of their claim, this group bludgeoned and took benefit of this flaw in governmental law. After independence in 1961, this group was treated the same as Kuwaitis and included among Kuwaitis in the census.

The number of stateless persons grew so fast and randomly that their number reached nearly 220,000 in June 1990 (Report submitted by the committee on stateless persons to the Council of Ministers). In outlining, certain features of this group, we can see why it is a political and social issue at present. After the Gulf War, the number suddenly declined to 117,604 in official government statistics, which shows that 53% of these persons had other nationalities and left the country during the war. This extreme decline proves what was suspected before that this group is a security threat to the country (Al-Awadhi, 1996, p.5). They also pose an economic problem as the majority, are unemployed (95% of them) and a minority work illegally in the private sector. From the humane aspect, this group is now deprived of health services and schooling for their children, and they cannot travel as their documents have not been renewed as well as their driving licenses.

Viewing this problem, in the social context, in 1993, there were 3024 Kuwaiti men married to women without nationality and 4036 Kuwaiti women married to men without nationality. The former group, if married for more than 15 years could avail of citizenship, but the latter group and their children remain stateless. At present, with the high birth rate of this group, their mean family size is seven persons, 58% of stateless persons are below 15 years of age. The majority of the adults are either illiterate or with only 6-8 years of schooling (87% of them) (Al Awadhi, 1996, p.13). When laws were strictly enforced and statistics made available, in early 1990, 27, 470 of this group submitted Iraqi documents i.e. 12.5% of the total number in this group. A further 22,966 rectified their true status and another 15,000 were revealed through government channels. The start of the Gulf War in 1990

further decreased the number of this group who fled and could not return.

As this report concerns migration policy and population, it will not dwell on the political implications, even though the migration policy had led to the majority of this group joining the Armed Forces, where they comprised 80% of the total prior to the Gulf War, but are now 25% of the total (Al-Awadhi, 1994, p.32). The continued presence of this group with few of them obtaining citizenship poses a population problem as unemployment, no education for the second generation (children of these stateless persons) and the difficulty of leading normal lives for these large numbers can have dire effects on Kuwait.

Policy No. 5

In order to reduce the unemployment rate of non-Kuwaitis and those who are in Kuwait on a legal work permit and not actually employed (the Kafil syndrome), the Labour and Social Affairs Ministry has opened a department since 1997 to reemploy non-Kuwaitis seeking a job. Officers in this department receive requests from employers needing different skills and migrants can approach this office, which then, relocates them in the job vacancy that is appropriate to their skills. This office has had positive results for both migrants and Kuwaiti employers.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that Kuwaitis have continued to decline in the population statistics. Uncoordinated economic growth and flaws in migration policies have led to an influx of male labour and mainly Asian migrants.

As Asian migrants increased, there emerged small communities to serve these people, who had different cultures, languages and social needs than the previously homogenous Arab society.. Indians and Pakistanis established schools, restaurants, cinemas, clubs, hospitals and grocery stores, video centers, etc. to serve the various ethnic needs

of the Asian community. These facilities were managed by Indians and owned by them. Wilson and Portes called such immigrant owned firms the enclave economy. These workers do not serve the national economy, but are an addition to it. The development of immigrant enclaves requires two conditions: first the presence of immigrants with sufficient capital and initial entrepreneurial skills; second, the revelation of the enclave labour force through sustained immigration. (Wilson and Portes, 1980, p. 302). In the last two decades, chain migration from the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia has led to their strong presence in the country.

Though they increased in numbers they could not assimilate as easily as earlier Arab migrants. Portes and Min Zhou, 1995, studied the second generation of migrants in the United States and found that situations may differ in the host country according to various factors such as political relations between the sending and receiving country and the state of the economy in the latter, and such specific variables as a pre-existing ethnic community (Portes and Min Zhou, 1995, p. 22). Political relations are friendly between exporting, Asian countries and Kuwait and the economic benefits from high wages makes Kuwait a desirable destination for immigrants. Migrants in Kuwait are not merely marginal as in many labour importing countries, but a significant proportion work in professional and administrative posts. Indians and Filipinos have their own ethnic communities, whereas other Asians do not encounter a receiving community that could make the transition easier. Furthermore, Indian migrants have their dependents settling in Kuwait and have formed a stable community in the mainstream of society. These two nationalities also have professional or technical skills, thus a proportion of them are in middle-income groups and have better job opportunities.

Kuwaitis are increasing in the labour force but are concentrated largely in intermediate jobs requiring administrative and clerical skills. Thus, the new migrants encounter a bottleneck effect, where they need

to be highly qualified to be employed or resign themselves to the lower rungs of the occupational ladder. With a great deal of the reconstruction of Kuwait completed, the government and Social Planners hope that in the year 2005 the share of immigrants will slowly reach reasonably low numbers, so that nationals are no longer a decreasing minority in their own land. But, this strategy needs a redistribution of Kuwaitis into all economic sectors so that they are more productive and not concentrated in the service sector of the government.

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القبس	العدد ٨٤٤٢	تاريخ ١٩٩٦/١٢/٢١
القبس	العدد ٨١٨٤	تاريخ ١٩٩٦/٤/٥
الدستور	العدد ٢	تاريخ ١٩٩٧/٧/٩
السياسة	العدد ١٠٢٣٤	تاريخ ١٩٩٧/٨/٢٣
الطلّيعة	العدد ١٣٠٦	تاريخ ١٩٩٧/١٢/١٠

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