

India to Gulf Migration Atlas 2026: State, District, Trade and Destination Dataset

A citable India-to-Gulf migration atlas built for researchers, journalists, policy writers, MBA students, and manpower planners. The dataset maps Indian GCC worker deployment across state, district-source, destination-country, trade, wage, and remittance layers. It combines MEA and eMigrate emigration clearances, World Bank KNOMAD remittance data, RBI remittance references, NSDC skill certification context, public GCC labour-force datasets, and Mahad Manpower anonymised placement records. District-level rankings are presented as a source-intensity index rather than official district clearance counts, with explicit caveats for researchers who need to cite the data responsibly.

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10 states

Account for roughly four-fifths of formal India-to-GCC emigration clearances, making source-state concentration the defining feature of the corridor.

Key Statistics

- 78%** Estimated share of 2025 India-to-GCC emigration clearances originating from the top ten source states
Source: eMigrate state-wise clearance data, Mahad synthesis
- 57%** Share of GCC-bound emigration originating from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal combined
Source: eMigrate state-wise breakdown 2024-2025
- 46** High-intensity district source clusters identified across the atlas using clearance, placement and training-footprint signals
Source: Mahad Manpower source-intensity index
- 6** Destination labour markets covered: Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain
Source: MEA and GCC labour statistics
- 41%** Skilled-trade share of formal India-to-GCC emigration clearances in 2025, up materially from the late-2010s baseline
Source: eMigrate occupation tags and NSDC skill-context data
- 28%** Approximate Uttar Pradesh share of India-to-GCC ECR clearances in 2025
Source: eMigrate source-state distribution
- 1.84M** Formal Indian worker deployments to the six GCC states during 2022-2025 recovery window
Source: MEA annual reports and eMigrate clearance totals
- \$56.2B** Estimated annual GCC-to-India remittance inflow for FY 2024-25
Source: World Bank KNOMAD and RBI remittance references

Why a Migration Atlas Matters

Most India-to-Gulf migration coverage reports a national total, a remittance figure, or a single destination-country number. That is useful, but it hides the geography of the corridor. Researchers need to know which Indian states supply which trades, which districts behave like repeat migration clusters,

how destination choices differ by source region, and where remittance dependence is structurally high. This atlas turns the corridor into layers: state, district-source, destination, trade and citation-ready datasets. The goal is not to replace official MEA or eMigrate data. The goal is to make a fragmented public-information field easier to inspect, download, compare, and cite. For journalists, it offers quick reference tables. For academic users, it provides caveats and source labels. For employers, it shows where mobilisation depth exists by trade and destination. For Google, it creates a genuinely useful research object rather than a thin keyword page.

State Layer: The Corridor Is Highly Concentrated

The headline pattern is concentration. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal together account for an estimated 57% of formal ECR-category GCC emigration clearances, with the top ten source states accounting for roughly 78%. This is not simply a population story. Kerala still holds a large migrant stock and a very high remittance footprint, but its share of new blue-collar GCC deployment is lower than its historical reputation suggests. Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have become structural supply states because they combine low local wage floors, established village-level migration chains, recruiter familiarity, and a growing skill-training footprint. Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan show a different profile: smaller total volumes but stronger trade specialisation. Punjab and Telangana mix formal blue-collar flows with higher non-ECR mobility. For researchers, the state layer is the best starting point because it separates legacy migration stocks from new worker-deployment flow.

District Source Index: What It Is and What It Is Not

District-level migration is the most valuable layer for researchers, but it is also the easiest layer to misuse. Official public dashboards do not consistently publish clean district-by-destination-by-trade clearance tables. For that reason, this atlas uses a source-intensity index rather than claiming exact official district totals. The index combines available state-wise eMigrate distribution, Mahad Manpower anonymised placement origin data, recruiter field observations, skill-centre concentration, and known chain-migration clusters. A score of 100 does not mean a district sent a quantified number of workers. It means that the district shows the strongest composite evidence of repeat GCC worker supply. Gorakhpur, Azamgarh, Siwan, Gopalganj, Malappuram and Basti score highly because they combine multiple signals: historical outflow, recruitment-chain density, trade-specific candidate depth, and employer familiarity. The index is designed for mapping and hypothesis-building, not for legal or official statistical claims.

Destination Layer: Saudi Arabia Is the Scale Market, UAE Is the Velocity Market

The destination layer shows a clear split between scale and speed. Saudi Arabia absorbs the largest share of Indian GCC-bound emigration, driven by construction, infrastructure, facility management, logistics and giga-project demand. The UAE remains the faster and more diversified mobilisation market, especially for hospitality, facility staff, MEP technicians, drivers, warehouse workers and service roles. Qatar is smaller after the World Cup construction peak, but it remains relevant for specialist trades and infrastructure maintenance. Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain operate as narrower corridors with more visible visa-cycle and quota sensitivity. Researchers should avoid treating the GCC as one labour market. A worker from Gorakhpur recruited as a mason into Saudi Arabia sits inside a different labour chain than a Hyderabad HVAC technician entering the UAE or a Kerala hospitality worker entering Qatar. Destination choice affects wages, processing time, compliance burden, and retention outcomes.

Trade Layer: Migration Is Shifting From Labour Export to Skill Export

The atlas reinforces a shift visible across the wider research library: India-to-Gulf migration is no longer only a helper and general labour story. Skilled and semi-skilled trades now dominate formal demand. Mason, steel-fixer, electrician, carpenter, plumber, HVAC technician, welder, driver, cleaner, facility staff, cook and hospitality roles form the backbone of current deployment. The trade layer matters because source districts are not interchangeable. Eastern UP and Bihar show deep candidate depth for civil trades and driving. Tamil Nadu is stronger in fabrication, welding, hospitality and technical trades. Kerala retains higher service, hospitality and driver relevance. Telangana and Maharashtra corridors lean more urban, with facility management and technical-role supply. A state-wise table without trade segmentation can mislead employers and researchers. The same destination country may recruit very different worker profiles from different Indian regions.

UP and Bihar: Chain Migration at District Scale

Uttar Pradesh and Bihar deserve their own analytical treatment because their migration patterns operate through dense chain-migration networks. Districts such as Gorakhpur, Azamgarh, Basti, Siwan, Gopalganj, Saran and Bhojpur have repeated household-level exposure to Gulf employment. That changes the recruitment market. Families understand salary ranges, medical requirements, visa wait times, passport processing and the difference between a strong offer and a risky one. Recruiters also return to these clusters because candidate mobilisation is faster and referral trust is stronger. The strength of this corridor is depth: large pools for civil trades, drivers, helpers, plumbers and electricians. The weakness is seasonality and volatility. Agricultural cycles, local elections, festival periods and sudden misinformation about overseas jobs can slow dispatch. Researchers studying labour supply should treat UP-Bihar as a social-network corridor rather than merely a high-population source region.

Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana: Different Kinds of Gulf Connectivity

Southern India shows a more differentiated Gulf relationship. Kerala has the deepest historical Gulf identity and a very high remittance stock, but its new blue-collar deployment share has softened as education levels, domestic wages and alternative migration routes changed the worker pool. Tamil Nadu is less dominant in raw volume but powerful in technical trades, fabrication, welding, hospitality and manufacturing-linked roles. Telangana, especially the Hyderabad recruitment and training ecosystem, is important for drivers, facility staff, HVAC, electricians and urban-service roles. These states matter for researchers because they separate migrant stock from current deployment flow. A district with older Gulf households may receive high remittances but send fewer new ECR workers. A city training hub may send fewer total workers than UP or Bihar but produce a higher trade-certification share. The atlas keeps those differences visible instead of flattening them into one national table.

Western and Northern Corridors: Rajasthan and Punjab

Rajasthan and Punjab illustrate why the atlas uses source-state and trade layers together. Rajasthan contributes a smaller share than UP or Bihar, but specific districts have strong construction and craft-trade relevance, including carpentry, stone work, masonry, driving and building finishing. Its migration pattern is highly trade-shaped. Punjab is different again: it has a strong international migration culture, but Gulf-bound blue-collar flows compete with Canada, Europe and domestic logistics opportunities. Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Amritsar and Hoshiarpur appear in the source-intensity layer because of driver, technician, logistics and security-role supply, but the corridor is more mixed with

non-ECR and higher-skilled mobility. For researchers, these states are useful comparison cases. They show how wage expectations, destination preference, skill profile and household migration ambition can redirect worker supply even when overseas employment awareness is high.

How Researchers Can Use This Dataset

The most useful way to cite the atlas is by layer. For a policy article, cite the state concentration numbers and the limitation that formal ECR clearances do not capture all non-ECR professionals. For a district-level story, cite the district source-intensity index and explicitly describe it as a composite signal. For a labour-market paper, use the trade and destination layers to compare wage corridors, mobilisation speed and skill certification. For a journalism piece, use the state snapshot table and download the CSV for charting. The atlas is published under CC-BY 4.0, so researchers can quote, embed and reuse the data with attribution. The downloadable CSV includes the headline statistics, charts, table and sources. The PDF version is designed for easy citation in reports, presentations and classroom material. This is why the atlas is more valuable than a normal blog post: it is an object people can reuse.

Limitations and Data Caveats

Every serious migration dataset needs caveats. First, public Indian emigration clearance data primarily captures ECR passport-category workers and does not fully capture non-ECR professionals, family-sponsored mobility, visit-visa conversions or informal status changes inside destination countries. Second, district-level public data is not consistently released in a clean, comparable format across year, destination and trade. The district source-intensity index is therefore an analytical construction, not an official government count. Third, remittance flows are difficult to allocate perfectly to source districts because bank routing, household residence and migrant origin do not always match. Fourth, Mahad Manpower placement data is useful for trade and recruitment-market insight but is one operator dataset, not a complete market census. The atlas is built to be citable because it states these limitations directly. Users should cite official sources for legal counts and use this atlas for synthesis, comparison and research direction.

"The missing piece in most Gulf migration coverage is geography. Everyone knows India sends workers to the Gulf, but very few datasets show how different the corridor looks when you split it by state, district signal, trade and destination. A Gorakhpur mason going to Saudi Arabia, a Malappuram driver going to the UAE and a Chennai welder going to Qatar are all inside the India-Gulf corridor, but they are not the same labour market. Researchers need that distinction if they want to explain the corridor accurately."

Obaidur Rahman, Mahad Manpower

State, District, Trade and Destination Snapshot, India to GCC 2026

Source state	High-intensit...	Primary GCC d...	Dominant trad...	Atlas signal	Best research...
Uttar Pradesh	Gorakhpur, Az...	Saudi Arabia,...	Mason, steel-...	Highest sourc...	Civil, MEP an...
Bihar	Siwan, Gopalg...	Saudi Arabia,...	Mason, helper...	Deep chain-mi...	Village-level...
West Bengal	Murshidabad, ...	Saudi Arabia,...	Cleaner, help...	Fast-rising e...	Low-wage serv...
Kerala	Malappuram, K...	UAE, Saudi Ar...	Hospitality, ...	High remittan...	Legacy Gulf m...
Tamil Nadu	Ramanathapura...	UAE, Qatar, S...	Welder, fabri...	Skilled techn...	Trade-certifi...

Rajasthan	Jaipur, Jhunj...	Saudi Arabia,...	Carpenter, st...	Specialised c...	Craft and bui...
Punjab	Ludhiana, Jal...	UAE, Qatar, B...	Driver, techn...	Higher non-EC...	Comparison wi...
Telangana	Hyderabad, Ni...	UAE, Saudi Ar...	Driver, elect...	Urban trainin...	Recruitment-m...

District entries are atlas source-intensity clusters, not official district clearance counts. Use the methodology section when citing district-level findings.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is included in the India to Gulf Migration Atlas 2026?

A. The atlas includes state-wise source concentration, district source-intensity clusters, destination-country mix, trade patterns, remittance context, methodology notes, sources, a downloadable CSV, a downloadable PDF and citation-ready schema for researchers and journalists.

Q. Is the district ranking an official government district clearance table?

A. No. The district layer is a source-intensity index, not an official district clearance count. It combines public state-level data, known source clusters, training-footprint indicators and Mahad Manpower anonymised placement signals. Researchers should cite it as a composite index.

Q. Which Indian state sends the most workers to the Gulf?

A. Uttar Pradesh is the largest source state in the atlas, with an estimated 28% share of formal India-to-GCC ECR emigration clearances in 2025. Bihar and West Bengal follow, making the eastern and north-central belt the dominant new-deployment corridor.

Q. Which districts are major Gulf migration source clusters?

A. High-intensity clusters include Gorakhpur, Azamgarh, Basti, Siwan, Gopalganj, Saran, Malappuram, Hyderabad, Jaipur and Ludhiana. These are source-intensity signals based on multiple evidence layers, not official clearance totals.

Q. Which Gulf country receives the largest share of Indian workers?

A. Saudi Arabia receives the largest share of formal Indian GCC-bound worker deployment, followed by the UAE, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain. Saudi Arabia is the scale market, while the UAE is often the faster and more diversified mobilisation market.

Q. Which trades are covered in the atlas?

A. The atlas covers common GCC manpower trades including mason, steel-fixer, electrician, carpenter, plumber, HVAC technician, welder, driver, cleaner, helper, cook, hospitality, facility staff and logistics roles.

Q. Can researchers download the dataset?

A. Yes. The research page includes a downloadable CSV with headline statistics, chart data, comparison table and source references, plus a PDF report for citation and offline sharing.

Q. Can this atlas be cited in academic or media work?

A. Yes. The atlas is published under Creative Commons CC-BY 4.0. You may cite, quote, embed or republish the data if you attribute Mahad Manpower Research and link back to the original report URL.

Methodology

This atlas combines six evidence layers. First, Ministry of External Affairs annual reports and eMigrate / Protector General of Emigrants data for formal India-to-GCC emigration clearance volumes, state source distribution, destination mix and occupation tags. Second, World Bank KNOMAD and RBI remittance references for corridor-level remittance context. Third, NSDC and sector skill council context for trade certification and training-footprint interpretation. Fourth, destination-country public labour statistics from GCC agencies including GASTAT and UAE FCSC, used to benchmark destination-market size and expatriate workforce exposure. Fifth, Mahad Manpower anonymised placement audit data (n=4,242 verified deployments, 2022-2025), used only for trade mix, district source-intensity signals and mobilisation

observations. Sixth, recruiter field observations across major source belts. District-level outputs are expressed as a composite source-intensity index because consistent official district-by-destination-by-trade tables are not publicly available across the full study period. Data cut-off: 9 May 2026.

Sources

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- * UAE Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Centre <https://fcsc.gov.ae/en-us>
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How to cite this report

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