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**AN EXPERIENTIAL ACCOUNT OF AN ETHNOGRAPHY  
OF BARKAS: AN ARABIAN COLONY IN HYDERABAD**

**Dr. ANUSHYAMA MUKHERJEE**



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# **An Experiential account of an Ethnography of Barkas: An Arabian Colony in Hyderabad**

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## **Abstract**

This paper is based on an ethnographic account of an Arabian community called Barkas in Hyderabad (India). Barkas is a neighbourhood in Hyderabad that used to serve as military barracks of the Nizam of Hyderabad. The word is believed to have derived from English word Barracks. The area is also known as 'Little Arabia.' The migrants settled in barracks on the outskirts of the city. Most of the residents of the colony are inhabitants of Yemen and Arabia. The primary question in this paper is to look at how migrants from this neighbourhood construct multiple homeland/s and cultural identities with regard to language, race, gender differences, food and dress. The social setting of this neighbourhood made it unique from the rest of the city of Hyderabad and could be popularly known as ghetto community. Post 1970s this community has also made their mark in the Gulf countries by doing various kinds of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs and it is also popularly known as an area from where every household has at least one member working in Gulf countries. As an researcher being an outsider to their community, access to them was a challenge. Illegal businesses and gender segregation has made this community a closed community and made the accessibility even more difficult. . Ethnographic field work included observation, in-depth interviews, participant observation and situational conversations throughout the period. The experience of being a researcher in Barkas has been quite fascinating.

Keywords: Barkas, Arabian Diaspora in India

## **Biodata**

Dr Anushyama Mukherjee obtained her Ph.D Sociology from Department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad, India. Currently she is working at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Mumbai, India) as a Research Officer on Early and Child Marriage, a Monitoring and Evaluation project in India. Her Ph.D. research topic was "Understanding Homeland/s and Identities: A Study of Barkas in Hyderabad". She has published paper in the Journal for Deccan Studies, July 2014- December 2014, edition, on Understanding Homeland/s and Identities: A Study of Barkas in Hyderabad

Statement: All the views expressed in the paper are of the author(s).

# An Experiential account of an Ethnography of Barkas: An Arabian Colony in Hyderabad

**Dr. Anushyama Mukherjee**

This paper is an attempt to understand the construction of homeland/s and identities in Barkas, an Arabian colony in Hyderabad. Barkas is mainly inhabited by the Hadramis from Yemen. With the end of the Nizam's era in 1956, Hadramis and many Hyderabadis lost their jobs as the Nizam's bodyguards and treasury guards and started migrating to the Gulf countries especially from the 1970s as there was an oil boom. Hadramis first migrated to India around 200 years ago and it is commonly believed by the community that the first group comprised of Sayyids, who were descendants of the family of the Prophet Mohammad. They came to India and became preachers of Sufism mainly to the Hyderabadis Muslims at that time. The second group primarily Sunnis, which was bigger came in search of greener pastures and got employment in the armies of native rulers of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. In Hyderabad, some of them rose to become part of the Nizam's nobility whereas others entered into the Nizam's irregular army. I am trying to look at the movements of people from Hyderabad especially from Barkas to the Gulf countries. In this process of crossing borders, this paper is an attempt to understand the concept of homeland for the migrants from Barkas. The homeland issue gives rise to multiple identities which an individual experiences post migration.

From the 1970s, large number of individuals started migrating to the Gulf countries for better economic opportunities. It was push from poverty and unemployment to a pull of economic opportunity. Oil was found in huge quantities in the Gulf countries and therefore infrastructural development in these countries started taking

place. As these countries have less man power, the governments of these countries have started hiring labourers from other countries. In India, migrants went in large numbers from Kerala followed by Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. This type of migration was mainly based on contracts for a fixed period of time. A large number of individuals from the city of Hyderabad who were unemployed or did part time informal jobs readily took up the jobs that were available in the Gulf. In this way, migration to the Gulf from Hyderabad has started taking place.

## **Barkas**

Barkas, a neighbourhood in Hyderabad, is inhabited mainly by the Chaush community who were descendants of the Hadrami Arab military men and bodyguards hailing from the Hadramaut region of Yemen. It is also inhabited by some former employees of the Nizam of Hyderabad who are not from Hadramaut. This area used to serve as the Military Barracks of the Nizam of Hyderabad. The word is believed to have been derived from the English word Barracks. The area is also known as little Arabia as even today the area has elements of an Arabian colony by the locals. This paper is an ethnographic study based on 43 families in Barkas from August 2011 to February 2012. Respondents were selected from different age groups. It has been ethnography of Barkas for 11 months including situational conversations, interviews, participant observation and in-depth interviews. Different groups that migrated to the Gulf are mixed between age and gender. Out of 196 individuals from 43 households, there are 76 men and 87 women and 33 (5-17 years of age) children who have

migrated to the Gulf for various purposes. Women have migrated as a part of marriage migration and/or with families. 48 men have migrated to UAE, six have migrated to Saudi Arabia followed by Qatar (three), Oman (two), Bahrain (two). Two women were married in Yemen. Three men have migrated to Hadramaut for occupational purposes. 17 women have migrated spread in different countries post marriage with their husbands. 14 men, women and children have migrated with their families, there are two men who are searching for jobs in the Gulf at the time of the interview, 54 men, women and children have visited their immediate family members as occasional visitors and 43 men, women and children have never visited the Gulf.

Data collected by Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) in 2001 showed that the total population of Barkas was 34,288 among which 17,808 males and 16,480 females. The neighbourhood is surrounded by Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) camp, quarters of CRPF and Kendriya Vidyalaya School now. Here, every household has at least one member from each generation either returned or working in the gulf. Today the local market has products from Saudi Arabia brought by migrants and their families. Influence of gulf was seen in the names of the shops such as Hadrami Harees, a café, Musqati Dairy, Dubai Shopping, Al-Ain Tailors, Dubai Footwear, Dubai Burqa shop, Oman general Stores, Hadrami shoes, New Saudi Arabian Shawarma Restaurant and Yemeni video library. Given the characteristic feature of the area, sociologically, I found ethnography is the best method that could be applied to understand the complexities and detailed narratives of Gulf migrants from Barkas.

This paper is based on the broader understanding of diaspora and migration as it involves movements of people between different countries from Barkas. My study also attempts to understand the question of transnationalism which means reaching beyond or transcending boundaries. This also means that several nations would be involved in the process of global exchange. As Peggy Levitt (2003) notes, 'transnationalism is the process of

migrants remain(ing) strongly connected to their homeland even as they become incorporated into the United States. Migrants use a variety of transnational political, religious and civic arenas to forge social relationship, earn their livelihoods, and exercise their rights across borders.' Alejandro Portes (1996: 160) has said that analysing the economic origins of the transnational communities and arguing that the result of an economic project is the transformation of the immigrants into transnational communities, 'characterised by dense network across space by an increasing number of people who lead dual lives...move easily between cultures, frequently maintain homes in two countries and pursue economic political and cultural interest that require simultaneous presence in both.' This has proved to be true from the large scale migration flows happened from the city of Hyderabad either to the West or to the Gulf. In both these places, immigrants are living in dual lives and maintaining homes although in the Gulf, immigrants cannot occupy citizenships.

### *Imagined Community, Cultural Identity and Hybridity*

In order to understand the construction of homeland/s and multiple identities, I have based my analysis on the concepts of Benedict Anderson's (1983) 'imagined community', Stuart Hall's cultural identity and Homi Bhabha's concept of cultural hybridity. Benedict Anderson's (1983) concept of imagined community is significant as he says that communities are to be distinguished by their falsity/genuineness but by the way they are imagined. Imagined community is a term coined by Benedict Anderson. An imagined community is different from an actual community because it is not based on everyday face to face interaction between its members. As Anderson puts it, a nation 'is imagined because the members of even smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'. Here it also means that they identify as from the same nation having some common interests. In this paper, from the imagined community concept, I have used the idea of imagined

homeland that emerges differently for different residents of Barkas depending on age, gender and movements around the world .

Stuart Hall (1996) has dealt with the subject of race and 'black diaspora'- its formation and process of growth and the way it is understood. His understanding of identity has influenced both cultural and diaspora studies in a significant manner. According to him, cultural identity is a 'production' which is never complete, always in process and always constituted within representation. Further he argued that there are two ways of looking at cultural identity- firstly, in terms of one shared culture which is collective and people with same ancestry hold within. Hall's understanding of any diasporic community is interesting as diaspora does not refer to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must return at any cost. There is a conception and recognition of an identity that does not die with intersecting with new cultures but is hybrid. Diasporic communities are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew through transformation and difference (Hall 1996). As this new place is created, it gives rise to the desire to return to the homeland where they imagined, narrated and searched for their lost origins. This return need not be actual but imagined as well.

Homi Bhabha's work (1994) on hybrid culture is significant. Bhabha uses hybridity as an in-between term referring to a 'third space' and to ambivalence and mimicry in the context of colonial-cultural interface. In other words, it is how newness enters the world. In this way diaspora arrives in the new world and reconstructs and reforms the cultural mixing with the hostland and produces a hybrid identity. In my study, using Bhabha, this mixture of culture is due to historical transformation and mixing of two or more cultures which has happened in Barkas due to mixed marriages for more than four decades and post migration to the Gulf. Closely linked to the concept of hybridity is diaspora. Based on the above theoretical understanding, I have looked at the

construction of homeland and multiple cultural identities of the individuals in Barkas.

### **Construction of Multiple Homeland/s**

Multiple homelands are created and recreated by the migrants of Barkas based on their collective identity, shared beliefs, social networks and experiences in the Gulf countries. Presently, residents of Barkas migrate voluntarily and are settling into their new homes and finding various ways to assimilate in the new society. Many migrants have stressed that home is in two places i.e. where your home is and where your family is. The home is where your background is and where your ancestors are from. One respondent Mohammad Shamlan, a driver who works for a private household in Sharjah has aptly pointed out,

*Home is wherever I am. Home is within me. I carry everyone and everything with me wherever I go.*

### **Construction of Multiple Homelands in Barkas**

Transnational existence and life in exile, for example the Jewish diaspora, pave the way for possibly different and inventive conceptualisation of home. Migrants from Barkas are expatriates as they migrate for a fixed period of time to the Gulf as naturalisation of citizenship is not possible in the Gulf countries. It is a popular belief that migration to the Gulf happens mainly due to economic reasons. In this paper it is seen that migrants from Barkas, especially the Hadramis have a different notion of migration to the Gulf other than purely economic reasons. As citizenship is not given to any migrant in the Gulf, hence it is not always true that migrants live secluded lives by ignoring the culture of the Gulf. However, in contrast to the first and/or second generation, who cannot go back to Yemen, it is only through the migration that they are trying to recreate a homeland in Barkas. To create a home even when one is far away from it is primarily about finding security and safety and just coping with life. Generally, migrants from Barkas are spread in Bahrain, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar, as well as

USA, UK and Australia. There is no one country that they prefer to migrate to and the experiences are quite different in different countries. For many migrants, the differences between homeland and hostland are collapsing and those rigid binaries are no longer present. These migrants are moving beyond the concept of communities. It is now only about the movement of an individual, and ways in which his or her socio-economic background influences their relationship to place. There are different responses to the meaning and construction of homeland post migration to the Gulf such as Hadramaut as the original home, Gulf as the second home and Hyderabad as home or migrating to the Gulf means reaching near Yemen.

### *Hadramaut as the Original Home*

First, there are those families who believe that Hadramaut is their original home. These families have a collective memory of their homeland and their descendants have a collective myth and their ancestors had a myth of return unlike the next generations. Gillis (1994) has argued that identities and memories get transformed over time and as a result they tend to be 'subjective constructions of reality rather than objectively fixed phenomenon'. Geertz (1986) has pointed out that, 'like nostalgia, diversity is not what it used to be'. In other words, the past is reconstructed and presented in a hybrid manner which includes multiple cultures and identities. Rayaprol (1997) has also mentioned that the homeland that people construct is part real and part imagined. In this paper, the homeland that Hadramis of Barkas has created is partly imaginative because many of them have never visited Hadramaut in their lifetime. Hadramis of the first generation came from Yemen. Even the second generation has not visited Yemen in their lifetime except for a few. The second and mostly the third generations do not feel the need to visit Yemen as they have no attachment with the place as they were born and raised in Hyderabad. Their parents could not keep in touch with the families who were left behind in Yemen as communication across nations was not easy in those days. With the generations changing, the concept of Yemen homeland is disappearing. The issue of citizenship

is also important reason as to why first generation did not go back to Yemen. By the time, Hadramis have lost their occupations, they became Indian citizens. Moreover, the economic and political reasons did not give the Hadramis of Barkas enough of an opportunity to go back to Yemen, rather they migrated to the Gulf countries for occupational purposes using various types of social networks.

Language as a marker of identity is important in this neighbourhood as Hadramis of the first generation spoke in Arabic. The second, third and fourth or the present generations have started learning Arabic due to the influence of the Gulf. In the Gulf countries, migrants first have to learn Arabic and the residents prefer speaking in Arabic today than Urdu which was used until about 1956 and the formation of the state of Andhra Pradesh. Children who are raised in the Gulf, have English medium education, and like other children in the English dominated world, they have started speaking English even at home. For the Hadrami parents and grandparents, it is important that the child should learn Arabic. Children born in Hadrami families are forgetting Arabic if they are studying in Hyderabad. It is mixed with Deccani Hindi or Urdu. Families are sending small children to Mosques to learn Arabic. Girls also attend Arabic classes till the age of twelve years. Therefore, parents in both places are trying to make their children learn Arabic through both formal and informal means.

### **Intergenerational Perceptions**

In Barkas, Hadrami migrants and their families at some point still consider Hadramaut as their original homeland. There is both a desperate and a hopeful clinging to the past and homeland. However, it differs within each family and between generations but there are families where people across generations have mentioned that Hadramaut is their original home. Older generations have drawn this belief and constructed their homeland on the basis of sharing common ancestry and history of their migration to India. In other words, more specifically, for the older Hadrami members of the neighbourhood, the only home in Hadram-

aut is because they share a common history.

There are many families where children are socialised to maintain the culture of Yemen, in Barkas, even today. However, much of the storytelling has changed over time as the older members have only a vague memory of their past. The history of Hadramaut is created and recreated with time and young generations mostly do not hold any memory related to the homeland as there is a nostalgia of the past. They do not know if the past was real or imagined. It is always a story narrated by the older generations. People construct the past and present in their own ways and that becomes hybrid in the present times. This is not unproblematic any longer. Aidan Arrowsmith (2006) has pointed out that nostalgia is experienced through photographs and memories attached to it. Moreover, with modern technological inventions, people who have been dispersed from their homelands, view the geographical landscape through internet and films as seen in the work of Ranjan Bandopadhyay (2008). Residents of Barkas, watch Yemeni movies and those who went to Yemen for short term visits, have brought back pictures of the city of Sana'a.

Restoring homeland does not mean moving there physically, but it has to do with reclaiming one's past and providing individuals with roots. Families still try to maintain ties with Yemen through various ways. Moreover, it is also interesting that they do not want to go back to Yemen even if they say that it is their home mainly due to political and economic reasons. Older members of the Hadrami families still consider Hadramaut as their real home as they have heard stories from their ancestors who were the personal guards of the Nizam. The later generations have migrated to the Gulf and made it their home in many cases. Salem Mafoor, a 52 year old respondent who migrated to different countries including Hadramaut has pointed out,

*I am a Hadrami by heart. When we discuss among ourselves then we say that what is wrong with us. We have changed. Our culture has got mixed with time in Hyderabad. Nowadays no one knows the real Hadra-*

*mi culture and do not think about Hadramaut as their home.*

This is one of the ways of attaching oneself with the homeland on the basis of regular life and everyday experiences. The meaning of diaspora is quite different from the old meaning where people were dispersed and can only be secured in relation to a particular homeland where they must return. Here, the meaning of diaspora is defined not by purity but by heterogeneity and diversity and by a conception of identity which is lived throughout with hybridity. Therefore there is a difference, a diversity and hybridity that makes the people of Barkas, a diaspora.

### *Gulf as the Present Home or Second Home*

Many families of both Hadramis and Hyderabadis believe that the Gulf is their present home and sometimes second home although they are aware that they will not be able to live in the Gulf permanently. Therefore, Gulf is a temporary home for many. For the Hyderabadis of Barkas, there is a constant desire to attach themselves with the local Arabs as many believe that the Gulf is their second home after Barkas. There are reasons as to why many immigrants from Barkas felt Gulf as their second home. Young population i.e. children of the migrants mentioned that as many of them were born in the Gulf so they call themselves as Arabs. This is because they were raised in the Gulf culture where they interact with the local culture on a daily basis. Omer Abdullah has described it when he lived in Dubai for more than a decade,

*I know people who love Dubai and are now used to that comfort level. There are no power cuts, no water problems, if you are earning good then you can afford a maid who is also an immigrant, then there is AC 24 hours, no beggars, no overcrowding and so many more facilities.*

### *Home is in Two Lands for Many*

Many migrants have stressed that home is in two places i.e. where your home is and where your family is. The home is where your background is and where your ancestors are from. This is also

contested because of the complex identities of the residents. Gulf is home for many till the time they are working whereas Hyderabad is also home because it is where their ancestors were born and lived and has memories.

Many also believe that home is where family is. For many, home is where the family currently resides as well as where family members had originated from. Many a times, these two places are not the same due to continuous migration to the Gulf countries. For the residents of Barkas, family plays a prominent role for migration as many want their families to migrate with them. Migrants have also pointed out that living with the family in the Gulf is more peaceful than living in Hyderabad. For the children it is alright if they are half-half. They are content with the fact that they have two homes and they can travel from one country to another. Here, the main argument is that migrants felt closer to locals because of language and superior Arab culture. Noor, a Hyderabad from Barkas who works as a bus driver in Ras al-Khaima and lives with his family has pointed out that,

*After working in Dubai for more than two decades, I can say that I have two homes. One is in Barkas and another in Dubai. I will not live there permanently but I prefer to call Dubai as my new home presently. I am much comfortable there than in Barkas.*

### ***Gulf Migration means reaching near to the Home (Yemen)***

However, there is another trend also where few Hadrami families have stressed that as their ancestors have migrated from Yemen and made Hyderabad their home, now migrating to the Gulf for work and/or for marriage, believe that migrating to the Gulf means reaching near Yemen as both have Arabian culture although it varied with different socio-economic class, families, and between generations. One commonality is visible and that is the presence of shared history and identity. Even if the Hadramis have varied responses yet there is one point where they collectively said that going to the Gulf means reaching near Yemen or mention that Hadramaut is their home even if they

have not seen it. Also the migrants construct home in different countries in the Gulf. For some Hadrami families, Dubai or Riyadh is their second home after Yemen whereas for many, Yemen is still their homeland. When migrant families mention that Riyadh or Dubai as their homeland it means that there is an influence of these countries in the lives of the migrants and their families.

### ***Hyderabad/Barkas as Home***

Earlier generations may still consider Yemen and Gulf to be their home or second home, whereas for the present generation are born in Barkas, and consider it to be their home. For the Hadrami fourth generation, Hadramaut is only a place in Yemen. They have no intention of constructing Hadramaut as their original home. Many young generation Hyderabadis have also stressed that Hyderabad is their home as there is always a fear of sudden expulsion from the Gulf. Migrants who believe that Barkas as their home and have migrated with families have close and continuing engagement with their homeland, Barkas. Therefore, there are different ways in which a migrant and his family constructs homeland for variety of reasons.

Being a Hadrami for the young generation is ambiguous which however does not say anything about the authenticity of their representations. It is different for the Hyderabadis in Barkas as the construction of homeland differs according to their experiences abroad. Home is constructed not as something removed or far away or confined to a particular place but as something which you can carry within you. Therefore, it is about the movement and is malleable. However, many young generation Hyderabadis have also stressed that Hyderabad is their home as there is always a fear of sudden expulsion from the Gulf. Faheem, a 34 year old Air Conditioner mechanic in Riyadh has pointed out,

*We cannot obtain citizenship rights, cannot participate in the politics and are restricted from many social benefits which the Arabs get. For me, Hyderabad is my home as I have my own people here who will protect me*

*and my family whenever required*

Migrants who believe that Barkas as their home and have migrated with families have close and continuing engagement with their homeland, Barkas. Therefore, there are different ways in which a migrant and his family constructs homeland for variety of reasons. Similarly, Awadh's mother who is in her sixties mentioned that,

*Children must come back to their homes. Although we consider Yemen to be our home but now it is Hyderabad. Moreover, India is good for education and children are competent here. Later on they can go to any part of the world to work or further study.*

### **Construction of Identities and Imaginary Homelands**

Self proclaimed Hadramis have an emotional memory of their homeland, Yemen but at the same time, they are comfortable with the present situation in Hyderabad and migration to the Gulf. It is not a forced migration rather a voluntary one. Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined community" is significant as communities are to be distinguished by their falsity/genuineness but by the way they are imagined. Here, the idea of imagined homeland emerges differently for different residents of Barkas depending on age, gender and movements around the world. Creation of a collective memory and cultural identity was therefore very much a family business which belongs to the future as well as to the past.

Moreover, shifting identities happens from sometimes being from Barkas or from Hyderabad or from India. Stuart Hall (1996: 21) explains the multiple complexities of culture among the diaspora communities abroad. As Hall quotes in his essay that identity is not a complete phenomenon and it keeps changing with variety of circumstances. Question of cultural identity also depends on the time period from where one is locating oneself. Therefore, construction of cultural identity will be different for families who have experienced migration in different time periods. Drawing from Hall (1996) there is a shared culture which is collective,

based on shared history and common ancestry.

### **Imagining Homeland/s and being a Hadrami-Hyderabad**

There are no pure Hadramis or Hyderabadis in Barkas. Identifying respondents as a Hadrami or a Hyderabad is done through how each one of them have identified themselves. Hadramis were present when they migrated to India but with mixed marriages with the Hyderabadis there is no pure Hadrami. It is hybrid and perhaps hyphenated. However, the culture of the neighbourhood is typically known as Hadrami culture, as families and individuals have identified themselves in different ways and therefore I have termed them as Hadrami-Hyderabad, a hyphenated identity.

There are multiple ways in which homeland/s are created and recreated in Barkas among the residents. The Hadrami identity that is perceived by them is very important. As it is becoming more symbolic and distant, the context of being without a homeland that Hadrami-ness is created. In Barkas, a hybrid Yemeni culture prevailed even among the Hyderabadis living where the presence of Hadramaut is strong even if the person is from a different ethnic background. It is only as Edward Said (1979: 4) has said, 'imaginative geography and history, which helps the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatising the difference between what is close to it and what is far away. It has acquired an imaginative or figurative value we can name and feel.' In Barkas, Hadramis constantly produce and reproduce the images of a Hadrami identity associated with their imagined homeland, Yemen. Self identified Hyderabadis in Barkas have clearly mentioned that either the Gulf is their second home or Hyderabad is their original home. The question of imagined homeland emerges when a Hadrami mentions about Yemen and his/her aspirations of reaching Yemen even if it is for a temporary visit. Identities through an imagined homeland in Barkas are constantly in the process of making and re-making through transformation and difference, they migrated to go back to their roots and to witness their original home. Tayab has pointed out,

*When I went to Yemen, I felt like it is my own country. It is very different from Hyderabad but it is my own. But people there treated me badly as if I do not belong there. I also tried to search my relatives but I could not find any. I stayed in caves as my visa expired and then with the help of an Arabian I migrated to Dammam and then to Dubai for work.*

Here, illegal migration has happened. Although this is not a regular phenomenon from Barkas but there were few individuals who went to Hadramaut for visiting their homeland, Yemen, illegally and later legally also to the Gulf countries for occupational purpose. These individuals mentioned openly that they have migrated illegally for various reasons. The reception to them in Yemen has been rather cold and unwelcoming.

### **Construction of Multiple Cultural Identities**

Much of the recent work on identity suggests that identity is 'in a constant state of flux and can never, nor will ever, be static' (Kershen 1998: 2). Transnational lives and attachment to new places also affect processes of identification. Meenakshi Thapan (2005) has argued that the ways in which global and local identities are negotiated depends on the class and the location of the migrants. Here it is based on the geographical location of the migrants where there is a shared past and the collective identity among the residents of Barkas. As many migrants have mentioned, Arab culture is superior and they bring back that culture to Hyderabad through food, dressing and language mainly. Ties with the Gulf are also strong through social media. Residents, who have never visited Gulf, know everything about the social life of Gulf through Television and internet. There has been a constant debate as how residents of Barkas identify themselves within and outside their locality. There is ambivalence in categorising them as forming one kind of identity. People negotiate different sides of their identities. For the Hadramis, the Hadrami identity neither yielded nor conserved fully rather it is complemented with new experiences, meetings and activities. For many Hadramis, an Arab identity is so important especially post migration

that they would identify them as Arabs in Hyderabad.

### **Conclusion**

Even in the 21st century, Hadramis of Barkas are trying to maintain the culture of Hadramaut to their full potential. Hadramis believe that they belong to multiple places. Construction of multiple homeland/s and cultural identities varies inter-generationally. Perceptions are dependent upon the connections that they experience in the Gulf and the social circle in both the countries that a migrant interacts with. It keeps changing before and after Gulf migration. Different positions that occur in an individual's life have different meanings and also have narratives of the past. Cultural identity has become vague for the younger generation who had never known about the homeland, Yemen. This new generation is without memories of the homeland, Yemen and the struggle of their ancestors. Hyderabad migrants mentioned that with a good life, good income and good friends, they have started feeling Gulf as their home. On the other hand, there are many who believe that Hyderabad is their only home as they were born in Hyderabad. Therefore the paper concludes that meaning of home kept changing post migration to the Gulf and also across generations. It is contextual in nature. The meaning of home kept changing also because of the blurred of fuzzy identities that occurs in an individual's life with the constant movement from one country to the other and back to his/her own country.

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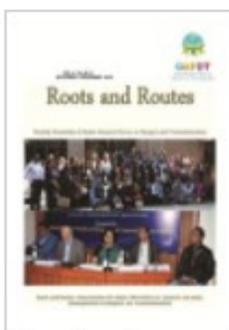
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# GRFDT NEWSLETTER

***Roots and Routes* disseminates the latest information on research and policy developments in Diaspora and trans**

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May-June 2016



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*Roots and Routes* is a monthly newsletter of the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT). It is inclusive of articles, book reviews and news analysis, which help in disseminating latest information on research and policy development in Diaspora and Transnationalism. The newsletter enjoys readership of academicians, policy experts, diaspora think tanks etc.

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- 1. Article** : consisting of well researched articles of about 3000-4000 words on any aspect of diaspora, migration and transnationalism.
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- 3. News analysis** : consisting of analyzing current news in about 1000-1500 words
- 4. Book reviews** : 1000-1500 words.

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