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**Letter Songs and Translocality in Music:
The Emotional Voyages of Mappilas Migrants of Kerala**

Integration and absorption of migrants and their descendants into society's cultural realm has long been a wonderful topic in the social fabric of Kerala. Muslims form the largest minority community in India. For decades, Muslims in Kerala have migrated to Gulf countries. The Muslims of Kerala's northern regions are known as Mappila Muslims, and they make up 42 percent of migrants from Kerala. Migration involves separation and it provides a unique vantage point from which to examine emotions. Letter songs (kathu Pattu) in Kerala depict this emotion of separation due to migration. Letter songs are folkloric music-type Mappila songs in Arabi Malayalam, with lyrics set to a melodic framework. These songs have a distinct cultural character inextricably related to Keralites and Arabs. The ability of these songs to depict the cultural embodiment, exchange, and synthesis of both Kerala and Gulf countries is one of its distinguishing features. The separation of a male migrant from his wife causes anguish, suffering, and disutility. Letter songs express profound insights into the misery, pain, and desire that couples experience because of migrant's physical separation from his family. Trans-locality has resulted not only in the homogenization of Mappila culture with Arabs, but also in emotional imbalances. Current proposition is an attempt to comprehend the broad relationship between music and mobility in the cultural and emotional realm of the Mappilas.

Bio

Shibinu S is a Senior Research Fellow at the International Institute for Migration and Development (IIMAD) and Director of the MK Haji Chair for Migration Studies, PSMO College, Kerala. He is currently a Research Guide and a member of the AC Steering Committee at the University of Calicut. He has published in international journals on the socio-economic and cultural implications of migration on individuals, communities and the economy and authored three books. He has coordinated three research projects funded by the UGC and the IUCAE. Presently he is the Co-Investigator of the World and Traditional Music Section of a British Library-funded project in Northern Kerala and Lakshadweep.