

Inmigration and Kerala Economy

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I. Introduction

Kerala has a long tradition of growth and development. From the very early decades itself the state gives much importance to health and education. Today's growth in health and education in Kerala is linked to the Kerala model of development. The development in Kerala has positive and negative effects. Migration promoted by educational improvement leads to a large amount of remittances, which in turn leads to the development of the economy. As a result of migration, unemployment has been reduced to a great extent. It leads to increase in the work participation rates of female unemployed labour force in the economy. On the other side, migration leads to educational unemployment in the economy, large number of elderly population, female headed households, the decline in birth rate, crimes against women and other negative effects in the economy.

Kerala has a high growth of health and education due to many reasons. The benevolent rulers of Travancore and Cochin had an enlightened policy towards health and education. The Christian missionaries through their benevolent activities promoted health and education through the establishment of schools, colleges and hospitals. There are several mass movements in Kerala steered by social reformers that have enlightened the minds of the people to fight for their right. The first elected Marxist government in the world was in Kerala. They implemented land reforms effectively.

High transport and communication system with very little difference between rural and urban area facilitated access to health and education. Matrilineal system though confined to certain high castes also made a high status for women compared to other parts of India. At the time of independence there was a wide gap among Human Development in these three princely states of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar.

Migration and Kerala economy:

Kerala lies between 8^o 18' and 12^o 48' North Latitude and 74^o 52 and 77^o 22' East Latitude. It has a total area of 38863 sq.km. which is 1.18 percent of the total area of the country. The state of Kerala is located in the Southwest part of India. According to 2001 Census Report of India, Kerala is the most literate state among all states and union territories. Kerala is the only state where the sex ratio is in favour of females. From 1981 onwards Kerala ranks first in the Human Development Index (HDI) that is prepared by Indian Planning Commission. All the conventional indicators rank Kerala as the topmost. But the status of women in respect of non-conventional indicators presents a dismal picture. Human Development Report brought out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) says that women in Kerala have shared the benefits of education and health than anywhere in India, although gender discrimination persists in many areas. Even though Kerala women are not facing problems that are faced by women in other parts of India and not physically endangering problems, but there are psychological problems like high rate of mental illness and suicide among them. Men have more rights and authority in houses and are free to move anywhere, women have restrictions on mobility. Dowry system is another evil. There is gender-based division of labour, with the burden of housework exclusively reserved for the female members of the family. Paucity of social interaction, gender-based violence, mental disorders, high rates of divorce and separation, incidence of suicide, growth and spread of dowry system and related crimes are still prevailing in the state.

II. Kerala: An Overview

The State of Kerala was formed as a result of the reorganization of the Malayalam speaking regions of the Madras presidency – Travancore, Cochin and Malabar. Kerala constitutes only 1.1 percent of India, but it contains 3.01 percent of India's population. The length and breadth are 580 km and 30-130 km respectively. The population spreads all over Kerala so that there is no big urban area as in other states. There are three predominant religions – Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Their corresponding percentage is 44.3 percent, 24.7 percent and 19 percent respectively. There are three distinct geographical divisions in Kerala: the low land, the midland and the high ranges. Table 3.6 presents the profile of Kerala State.

The highest density of population is in the low land and the lowest is in the high land. The high ranges mostly consists of peasants migrated from other areas. Because of the different agro-climatic conditions prevailing in Kerala, different types of food crops and cash crops are grown here. There are agro-based industries like coir, cashew, wood and edible oil. Kerala is well known for its Kerala model of development. One special feature of Kerala is the service sector. The largest share of income (55 percent) and employment (40 percent) are generated in the service sector (Human Development Report, 2005:8).

Table 1. Profile of Kerala (2001)

Total population	31838619
Males	15468664
Females	16369955
Area	38863 sq. km.
Number of districts	14
Number of taluks	63
Number of Municipal Corporations	5
Number of Municipalities	53
Number of Grama Panchayats	991
Density of population	819 per sq. km.
Sex ratio (No. of females/1000males)	1059
Literacy rate	87.86%
Male literacy rate	94.2%
Female literacy rate	87.86%

Source: Census of India, 2001

Population mobility has been explained by numerous terms. Because of the heterogeneity of the mobility process, the division helps to understand the movement in terms of space, time, residence and activity.

1) **Internal migration:** It means usual residents of a household who migrated out of the state and was living outside the state, but within the country.

2) **In-migration and out –migration:** In migration means migration to a place from another place within the same country and out-migration refers to migration out of a place to another place within the same country. Out migration is referred to as the area of destination.

3) **International migration:** The usual residents of a household who had migrated out of the country and lived outside the country.

Immigration and Emigration: Immigration refers to in-migration of persons from one country from another country. Emigration refers to out -migration from one country to another country.

Internal migration means migration between the states and **international migration** is migration between countries. On the basis of place the various migration streams of internal migration are the following: Rural to Rural migration; Rural to Urban migration; Urban to Urban migration; Urban to Rural migration

Voluntary migration can be categorized into two.

a) **Permanent migration:** The movement of people across national borders for settling permanently.

b) **Temporary migration:** In the case of temporary migration the migrant is not willing to stay permanently or the host country does not permit him to stay permanently.

There are four types of temporary migrations. Circular migration or Turn over migration (Oberai, 1987: 23-28) or Pendular migration or target migration or short-term migration. This means the movement is for a short period with the intention of coming back to the usual residence.

Seasonal migration: An important group of circular migrants are seasonal migrants. They combine activities in several places according to the availability of work in different places and then return to their place of origin.

Commuters: Who move to take up a specific activity, usually their economic activity, but who retain their residence elsewhere. There is variation in period. It lasts from five hours to a full day.

Safety-Valve Circulation or Stress Migration: It reflects population pressure on resources, growing inability to meet the demands of landlords and other exploiting elements, or a growing inability to reproduce productive forces by maintaining land quality through proper use of fallow periods, avoiding excessive interpolating and so on. The increased exploitation or the reduced ability to pay has often induced temporary migration by one or more family members in search of extra income or simply cash income. The resultant movement may be between rural and urban areas or from one rural area to another, to villages, to mines or simply in pursuit of harvests (Standing, 1985:8).

Migration flows:

a. **Individual migration:** In this case persons migrate individually.

b. **Group migration:** People migrate as a group as in the case of family migration.

c. **Chain migration:** It means migrants move to destinations which they have already known and where they have established contacts or they have heard about it through relatives and friends.

d. **Step migration:** In step migration, people migrate from rural to urban areas in a series of moves; first from rural villages to small towns, then to larger towns, and finally to metropolitan cities. Step migration is more important where large cities are far away and when rural urban migration is less well established.

Economic migrant: Here a person leaves one's habitual place of residence to settle outside one's country of origin in order to improve one's quality of life.

Spatial typology is of five types

(a) One-way journey

- (b) Return journey
- (c) Frequent two-way journeys
- (d) Re-emigration
- (e) Indeterminate i.e., nomadism or vagrancy.

In terms of **cross borders**, migration can be classified as

- a) International b) Inter regional and c) Intercontinental migration

Occupational migration: It involves the shift from one occupation to another.

Relay migration: Peasant families in some areas survive by this type of migration. The different family members going to work in the city or town at different stages of the family life cycle. Father, mothers and daughters alternatively go to work for survival (Standing, 1985:9).

Time migration:

Long-term migrants: This group is mostly regarded as migrants. Here the groups change their usual residence and change their place of activity for a prolonged period.

Long-term migrants can be classified into two groups:

Working life migrants: They change their place of residence and spend their adult working life elsewhere, but retain some link with their home area.

Lifetime migrants: Those who move from the place of origin and sever all such links with the homeland.

ILO (1989) classified migration as:

a. **Settlement migration:** This is the traditional type of migration in which people migrate from one country to another for better jobs and then settle there. People from under developed countries with higher skills and professional qualifications migrate to other countries and settle there. This is known as "Brain-drain".

b. **Contract migration:** This occurs when a worker is officially granted permission to enter another country and take up employment in a given job and where a contract is entered into on his behalf or between him and the employer or enterprise for which he is to work.

There are other ways of categorizing migrations. Migration can be

Migration stream: A group of migrants with a common origin and common destination.

Counter-stream migration: A flow of migrants in the opposite direction.

Cross migration: It refers to the total number of immigrants and out-migrants of an area.

Net migration: It is the difference between in migration and out-migration.

Non-migrants: Those who have never moved or not changed their place of residence or activity within a specified period.

Return migration: It is used when people return to their country or region after a significant period abroad or in another region.

Migrants can be divided into three main categories:

1. **Settlers:** They live permanently in their new country. The main countries of settlement are: United States, Canada and Australia.
2. **Contract workers:** They only stay for a specified period, according to the length of their contract.
3. **Professionals:** These are employees of transnational corporations who move from one country to another (Stalker's Guide, 2004).

Migration is the process of movement of people from one place in the world to another for better livelihood. People move from one place to another for migration are urbanization, industrialization, better employment opportunities and living conditions, attractive remuneration etc. Kerala has been known for a safe place for immigrants. Migrant labourers from other states have been found working in Kerala. All of these immigrants are from West Bengal or Bangladesh termed them as "Bengalis or Bhai's". These migrants are from neighboring states such as Tamil Nadu and Karnataka with their cultural similarities with our local population. Their population is an estimated 2.5 million as of 2016. The number continues to grow day by day. There are so many problems related to migration include the increase in crime rates, possible epidemic outbreaks, population growth, and lack of labour for locals etc. The increase in the number of workers in urban areas increases competition for the job, houses, school facilities etc. Having large population puts too much pressure on natural resources, amenities and services.

Migration has Positive and negative impacts on the local economy. The migrants are ready to work at a lower wage rate. Most of the migrants are uneducated and therefore, they are not only unfit for most jobs and also lack basic knowledge and life skills. Their residence leads to unhygienic conditions, crime, pollution, etc. It has been found that immigrants are beginning to form a colony in different parts of the state as a sort of permanent settlement. The environmental cleanliness in these areas is very poor. The houses built in these places unsanitary and unsafe to stay in. It is commonly noted that there is a lot of alcoholism and drug abuse among migrants. This is due to the fact that they live isolated, sub-human lives away from their families. The immigrants in Kerala know nothing about their labor rights and obligations and hence they live in poor conditions. They experience a lot of exploitation at the hands of local agents. The lack of education and

unawareness is the prime reason for this situation. The increase in the number of crimes is a big concern for the resident population and the administrators.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Kerala has been known for being a haven for migrant labourers from all over the country. Most of them arriving from varying states like Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, West Bengal etc., have taken over the workforce of Kerala. Construction, Transportation, Hotels and shops etc. are the most prominent sectors to have benefitted from this. The present study has been conducted in Ernakulam district. It will help to give more insight about the migrant labourers who live in Kerala.

For the purpose of analysis the data collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary tool used for data collection was survey questionnaire, which is one of the important methods of survey research. A structured in-depth interview schedule was used to collect information from the migrants.

WORK AND LIVING CONDITION

Today, migrants have become an integral part of Kerala's Economy. It can be noted that the migrants dominate over the workforce in Kerala. The survey shows that out of the 40 people interviewed, only four of the labourers are aware about labour laws. The majority of the respondents had no idea regarding the Labor laws prevailing in the State and their employers did not take the initiative to make them aware of the laws. It was observed that the majority of the workers often go for work even if they are sick due to the fear of being replaced by another worker. It was reported by the majority of them that they had no voice in the rules and conditions of work as they are entirely dictated by the employer's or the labor contractors.

HEALTH ISSUES

Migrants tend to work in more hazardous jobs than native born workers. Most migrants are doing jobs that the locals don't want to do. For getting benefits, a worker needs to register with the scheme. The membership has to be renewed every year by paying Rs 30. But till now, only about 50,000 of an estimated 25 lakh migrants have signed up.

APNA GHAR AND OTHER BENEFITS

As a first in the country, Kerala government has completed work on building accommodation for migrant workers in the state. The project, called Apna Ghar, is currently valued at 8.5 crore and has housed 640 people. The migrants are not aware about the scheme.

CRIME AND CONVICTION

Ernakulam, the district having the highest number of migrant workers in Kerala, tops in the case of the number of crimes committed by them also. As per the estimates of the state home department, as many as 1770 cases involving migrants have been reported since May 2011. Of this Ernakulam tops the charts with 660 cases, followed by Malappuram with a total of 240 cases, and Kozhikode with 132 cases. In the absence of petitioners, many such cases are not investigated.

IDENTIFICATION PROBLEMS AND CRIME EVASION

It is clear now that guest workers are pouring in to Kerala due to the opportunities available. But this has also led to the issue of identification. Too many migrants entering the state at the same time makes it difficult to keep track of them. Due to the fact there are already many of them working here without any need of registration papers and identification, a thorough record of all the Migrants in Kerala is not available. This makes it easier for them to evade crimes if necessary. No identification of a certain worker anywhere on the records also means that if he/she decides to leave abruptly no one would know how to track or find them. This has resulted in many problems including evasion of crimes. By the time they are suspected, they could've already left the state. The absence of proper documents is proving to be an impediment in keeping tabs on their movements.

The largest concentration of migrant workers is in the construction sector with a calculated rate of 60%. This sector has been witnessing a boom over the past decade. The remaining migrants work in farms, hotels and restaurants, shops and manufacturing units. The centers that are most populated with "Bhai's" are Perumbavoor in Ernakulam district, Pappad in Pattanamthitta and Cheruvannur in Kozhikode. These labourers wait in the main junction of their respective centers in groups for contractors to take them to construction sites or to be hired by individuals, who require their services. The junction becomes deserted within the hour and gets crowded again in the evening as the migrants return to pick up provisions, recharge mobiles and do other chores.

The following tables analyse the working condition of migrant workers in Kerala.

Table 2. Working Position

Working Position	No. of workers	Percentage
Under a Contractor	24	64 %
Under an Employer	16	36 %
Total	40	100 %

Source: Primary Data

The table 2 shows that over 64 percent of the respondents are working under a contractor and 36 percent under an employer. So the majority of migrant workers are being employed by contractors .

Table 3. Employment sector

Working Sector	Frequency	Percent
Construction	14	56.0%
Trade	11	44.0%
Manufacturing	8	32.0%
Agriculture	4	16.0%
Hotel and Restaurant	2	8.0%
Mixed	1	4.0%
Total	40	100.0

Source: Primary Data

The table 3 shows that the highest percentage of migrant workers are in the Construction sector. Then trade takes second place with 44 % and Manufacturing sector follows with 32 %. Agriculture sector has a concentration of 16 %, followed by Mixed sectors having 4%. This just goes to show that the major working sectors have a good concentration of migrant employers.

Table 4. Daily Wages

Daily Wages	Frequency	Percent
Below 200	2	8.0%
200-400	8	32.0%
400-600	16	64.0%
600-800	11	44.0%
Above 800	3	12.0%
Total	40	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 given above shows that around 64% of workers receive a daily wage of Rs 400-600. 44 % of workers receive daily wages between 600-800 Rupees. With 32 % receiving between Rs 200-400 and 12 % above 800 Rs, the lowest received is below 200 Rupees among 8 % of workers.

Table 5. Housing Arrangements

Dwelling	Frequency	Percent
House	21	52.5%
Room	19	47.5
Total	40	100

Source: Primary Data

The table 5 shows that around 52.5 % of respondents had housing arrangements for living space. 47.5 % of the respondents are staying in rooms. This means that a good amount of migrant workers were living in their own homes rather than paid living quarters.

Table 6. Working hours

Working Hours	Number Of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 8 hours	0	0
8 hours	5	12.5%
8-10 hours	12	30%
Above 10 hours	23	57.5%
Total	40	100%

Source: Primary Data

The table shows that the longest working hours are above 10 hours with a concentration of 57.5 % of workers. 30 % of workers have a working time between 8-10 hours. This is followed by 12.5 % of workers having a working time of 8 hours. The percentage of respondents who had less than 8 hours of work came to be nil.

Table 7 Period of Working in Kerala

Period of Working	No. Of Workers	Percentage
Less than one year	5	12.5 %
1-2 years	16	40 %
2-3 years	10	25 %
3-4 years	5	12.5 %
4-5 years	2	5 %
5 and above	2	5 %
Total	40	100 %

Source: Primary Data

The table given above shows the statistics of period of working of the respondents in Kerala. The longest time is between 1-2 years with a percentage of 40 %. 25 % of workers have been working here for a period of 2-3 years. Between a period of less than one year and 3-4 years a common percentage of 12.5 % have been working here. The lowest periods are between 4-5 years and above 5 years with only a low 5 %.

Table 8. Medical Help

Medical Assistance	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	26	65%
No	14	35%
Total	40	100%

Source: Primary Data

The table given above shows that 65 % of respondents received and receives medical attention when needed. Though 35 % of the respondents do not receive the necessary medical care and this is concerning.

Migration in its core sense is the moving of a person or group of persons from one place (city, village, country etc.) to another. It has had its positive and negative impacts on the economy in selection. Migration has both economic and social on the society.

Kerala has been a migrant economy at least for the past four decades. Whatever progress Kerala and its people have achieved on any front, has been based on the money brought in by those toiling in the deserts of Arabian Gulf in human climatic and labour conditions. Stories of their hardship like portrayal by agents, ditching by employers, non-payment of wages, illegal confiscation of travel documents by sponsors, non-availability of treatment etc., are abound. The workers arriving mostly from other states like Assam, West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand and Bihar are filling that Vacuum in Kerala.

III. Findings

1. Employers exploit the migrant workers because of the fact that they need employment. It leads to low wage rates and long working hours.
2. The medical facilities should be available to all equally .
3. Awareness of labour laws to the migrants is necessary.
4. The attitude of the locals towards migrants is discriminative and in often cases racist.
5. Government schemes were not reaching enough to these workers due to lack of participation and knowledge.
6. The unhygienic conditions of living space and unhealthy atmosphere of working place has led to guest workers suffering from various health problems and also diseases that are air-borne and water borne.
7. Due to the influx of migrant workers in to the state, there is identification problem. And because of this, crimes can go un-punished and makes it easier for them to evade them.

The exploitation of migrant workers at the hands of employers and contractors must be stopped. In order to do this the class difference and nature of behavior between employers and guest workers should be cleared. Maintaining a healthy employer – worker experience will ultimately harbor benefits for the state and also improve the experience guest workers in Kerala. Migration- nterregional, interstate, national, and international has been a topic of serious study and discussion among the economists and sociologists. These studies highlighted the various aspects and implications of migration. As the world is growing or shrinking into a global village, migration studies have become more relevant now than ever before. In Kerala, even though internal migration is mostly a male phenomenon, no studies related to female emigration from Kerala has been undertaken. The Centre for Development Studies had conducted many studies related to migration. A holistic study about internal migration will throw light on the reasons of migration, solutions to the problems and suggestions for improvement.

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