



A study on the socio-economic conditions of migrant workers in rural Thrissur

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Abstract

Kerala is well-known for the migration of its labour force to different regions, especially to the Gulf countries. The number of Kerala emigrants living abroad today is nearly 2.28 million; another 1.15 million people have returned after working abroad. There are, in addition, 3.43 million non-resident Keralites (NRKs) and another 9.31 lakh Kerala migrants living in other States in India. Kerala became an attractive destination for migrants for them due to the scarcity of labour in the state and high wage compared to other Indian states. Initially they were confined to urban areas, now they are also working in rural areas that too in large numbers. A lot of such migrants came from the neighbouring southern States initially, but workers from West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand now come to Kerala. They include construction workers, casual labourers, road workers, semi-skilled carpenters, masons, plumbers, electricians, and, of late, farmworkers, domestic helps and hotel employees. Their living conditions are very poor.

Keywords: in-migration, labour scarcity, semi-skilled labourers

Introduction

According to Richard Black- "Migration is an important way to escape from poverty and suppression". The distribution of population on the globe has always been responded to opportunities that different territories provide. The crucial motivation for migration is primarily economic. The greater the difference in economic opportunities between regions, greater the flow of migrants between them. Though distance is usually a significant intervening obstacle, its negative impact can be largely offset by sizable income differentials. In addition to economic motive, people migrate to improve their education or skill level to escape social and cultural imprisonment in homogenous rural areas and also to join family and friends who have previously migrated to urban areas. Migration is a Complex phenomenon and has different dimensions in terms of duration, nature of origin, destination and characteristics of migrants. Interstate migration is one among different types of migration. It is defined as the movement of people from the place of residence to a state other than of birth. As per 2001 census 307.2 million persons or about 30% of Indian population were migrants of which 42.1 million were inter-state migrants. According to the 2011 census the number has grown up. In India most backward states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and North eastern states etc. have experienced significant net out Migration. In India, our Kerala is known for its international Migration to the Gulf countries. But in recent years Kerala is witnessing large inflow of Migrant

labour from different parts of the country. The last count shows that 25 lakh migrant labourers are working in Kerala. And their numbers are growing at an incredible pace of around 10 percent annually. And number of in-migrant labourers working in the rural areas seems to go up with passing days. In contrast, nearly 22.8 lakh keralites are working abroad and nearly 10 lakh keralites working in other Indian states, says the study conducted by Gulali institute of Finance and Taxation.

Objectives

- To find the factors responsible for the migration of in-migrant workers in rural areas of Thrissur
- To analyse the socio-economic of in-migrant workers in rural areas of Thrissur

Data Source

Both primary data and secondary data have been used for the present study. Primary data were collected from randomly selected 100 respondents from different grama panchayaths in Kerala. Secondary data was collected from various studies published.

Methods Used

A well-structured schedule has been used to collect data from the respondents. Tables and Percentages were used to analyse the data.

Table 1: Reasons for migration

Reasons of Migration	Frequency	Percent
Get employment / better employment	34	34
Meeting household expenditure	20	20
Accumulate Savings	16	16
Repayment of debt	12	12
Marriage of dependents and Financing their education	14	14
Purchase of land or Construction of the House	4	4
Total	100	100

From table 1 it can be seen that most of the in-migrants that is 34 percent are coming to Kerala for better employment. Only one labourer among 4 percent labourers came here to purchase land or house. The percentage of labourers who comes here to accumulate savings and to meet household expenditure is probably high.

Table 2: Reason for coming to work in rural area

Reason	Frequency	percentage
No particular reason	44	44
Lack of work in urban area	25	25
Wage difference	18	18
Work in agriculturally sector	13	13
total	100	00

From this table it is evident that 44 percent have no particular reason for coming to work in rural area where as 18 percent came to work in rural area as wages were high in rural area compared to urban area. 13 percent came to work in rural area because they were able to utilize their skills in agricultural sector there.

Table 3: working sectors

Sector	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture	37	37
Construction	40	40
Domestic work	16	16
Self employed	7	7
Total	100	100

From table 3 it is revealed that majority that is 40 percent of the in migrant labourers are working in the construction sector and only 7 percent are self-employed

Table 4: states of in- migrant workers

Reason	Frequency	percentage
Tamil Nadu	27	27
Assam	10	10
West Bengal	24	24
Orissa	16	16
Bihar	12	12
Jharkhand	5	5
Uttar Pradesh	6	6
Total	100	00

From table 4, it is revealed that 27 percent of the workers are from neighbor state Tamil Nadu and 24 percent are from west

Bengal. only 5 percent are from Jharkhand and 6 percent are from Uttar Pradesh

Table 5: socio-economic status of migrants

Socio-Economic Characterestic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	100	100
Female	0	0
Total	100	100
Age		
Below 25	40	40
25-50	43	43
Above 50	17	17
Total	100	100
Religion		
Hindu	75	75
Muslim	16	16
Christian	9	9
Total	100	100
Marital Status		
Married	64	64
Unmarried	36	36
Total	100	100
Economic Status		
Apl	56	56
Bpl	44	44
Total	100	100
Monthly Income In Rupees		
2000-3500	18	18
3500-5000	33	33
5000-7000	25	25
Above 7000	24	24
Total	100	100
Annual Savings In Rupees		
No	63	63
Less Than 1500	10	10
1500-3000	8	8
3000-5000	13	13
5000-10000	4	4
Above 10000	2	2
Total	100	100

Findings

Most of the in-migrants that is, 34 percent are coming to Kerala for better employment. Only one labourer among 4 percent labourers came here to purchase land or house. The percentage of labourers who comes here to accumulate savings and to meet household expenditure are probably high. 12 percent of the workers have come here to pay off debt whereas 16 percent wants to accumulate savings. 44 percent have no particular reason for coming to work in rural area where as 18 percent came to work in rural area as wages were high in rural area compared to urban area. 13 percent came to work in rural area because they were able to utilize their skills in agricultural sector there. 27 percent of the workers are from neighbor state Tamil Nadu, 24 percent are from west Bengal and 16 percent are from odisha. only 5 percent are from Jharkhand and 6 percent are from Uttar Pradesh where as 10 percent come from the north-western state Assam. All the workers in the sample were males Even in rural areas, majority that is 40 percent of the in migrant labourers are

working in the construction sector and 37 percent are employed in the agricultural sector. only 7 percent are self-employed. Among the workers 43 percent belong to the age group of 25-50, 40 percent are below 25 and 17 percent are aged above 50. Majority of the in-migrant labourers that is 75 percent are Hindus, 16 percent are Muslims and 9 percent are Christians. 64 percent of the in-migrant labourers are married where as 36 percent are not. More than half that is 56 percent of the respondents belong to APL category even after having a low income. And 44 percent belongs to BPL category. 49 percent of the respondents have a monthly income above 5000 rupee and 51 percent have a monthly income below 5000 rupee. There are no savings for them as far as 63 percent of the respondents are concerned and among those who have savings only 2 percent have savings above 10000.

Conclusion

For in-migrant labourers Kerala is what gulf is to keralites. They are slowly replacing the native labourers not only in urban areas but also in rural areas. Rural paddy fields in Thrissur are now filled with these in-migrant labourers. They seem to be happy with the wages they receive because they are quite higher compared to their states they have absolutely have no idea about the prevailing wage rate in the state. Everyone seems to be ignorant of impact that their willingness to underbid local-wages in Kerala is going to have on the long-term position of workers in Kerala. Majority of them have no savings and no investment and their standard of living is very low. They are not even of the rights they are entitled to have and their employers make optimum use of their ignorance. It can never be denied that they have become a backbone of the rural economy of our state and it's our responsibility to ensure their welfare.

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