

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MIGRANT LABOURERS ON CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN KERALA – A STUDY ON CHANGANASSERRY TALUK

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Abstract- Migration is a way to move from one place to another in order to live and work. Movement of people from their home to another city, state or country, for a job, shelter or some other reasons is called migration. Migration from rural areas to urban areas has increased in past few years in India. Now-a-days many people decide to migrate to have a better life. Employment opportunities are the most common reason due to which people migrate. Migrant labourers are now present in almost all sectors of Kerala economy and their population is high in Perumbavoor of Ernakulam district and Payippad of Changanacherry Taluk in Kottayam district is ranked second. The positive and negative impact of migrant labourers in the construction industry in Kerala as well as in its economy and society, as a whole, is analysed through this study on the basis of the research conducted in the Changanacherry Taluk. This paper analyses the socio-economic impact of migrant workers in Kerala and also the positive and negative impact of migrant labourers, especially in the construction industry of Kerala.

Key Words: Migration, construction industry, Migrant labourers, reasons of migration

1. INTRODUCTION

Human migration is the movement of people from one place to another with the intention of settling permanently or temporarily in a new location. Migration is mainly classified into internal and external migrations. The movement of people within the country or continent is internal migration whereas; the movement of people across state, country or continent is external migration. The other categories of migration are emigration, immigration, return migration, seasonal migration, etc.... There numerous reasons for human migration which is divided into two – push factors and pull factors. Push factors include leaving a place because of problems such as food shortage, war or flood. Pull factors include moving to a place because of something good such as nicer climate, job opportunities or educational purposes. Also, there are additional reasons like natural disasters, lack of natural resources, the state economy, etc.... Numerous causes impel migrants to move to another country or state. For instance, globalisation has increased the demand for workers, in order to sustain national economies. Thus, one category of economic migrants – generally from impoverished developing countries – migrates to obtain sufficient income for survival. A similar kind of reasons induces migration of workers across different states of a country. India is one among the top immigration country and also one among the countries where migration originated in ancient periods. Internal migration spurred primarily by employment and marriage helps shape the economic, social and political life of India's sending and receiving regions. About two out of ten Indians are internal migrants who have moved across district or state lines – a rate notable for the sheer numbers who move within a country with a population that tops 1.2 billion.

The phenomenon of migration is associated with a number of economic advantages and disadvantages. Migration flows bring benefits to those who affect them, but in varying proportion. For the country or state of departure, the export of human capital represent a loss of value added which could have been achieved by that country or state. For the host country or state, they are manifested in the labour market by: contributing to reducing the work force deficit, alleviating the demographic aging process and tensions created on the labour and budgetary levels, contributions to increasing production, including exports. For the workers the consequences are diverse but the balance is positive. Linked on earnings it has been found the annual income which guarantees the reproduction of employment which they would not have earned in their country or state. Migration also increases their savings and investment capacity, either in durable goods or in launching a business. In addition, they attain a series of professional gains and work culture, knowledge, skills, behaviour, discipline, and job security.

The positive impact of migration includes the filling of job vacancies and skill gaps, sustainability of economic growth, filling of pension gaps, bringing energy and innovation, enrichment of culture diversities, balancing of regional development within a country by the flow of income from developed area to less developed areas through labourers, etc.... On the other hand, the negative impacts include occurrence of wage depression at least temporarily, having workers willing to work for relatively lower wages which may allow employers to ignore productivity, training and innovation, exploitation of migrants, pressure of increasing population on public services, creation of unemployment due to unrestricted migration, existence of integration

difficulties and friction with local people, more security monitoring due to large movement of people, facilitation of crime and people trafficking because of ease of movement, etc....

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Migrations have been a way of life in Kerala for decades. As, waves of Keralites left for the Gulf, their paces were taken by a corresponding wave of works from North India. Similar to the increased out-migration of labourers from Kerala that started years back to the Gulf and Middle Eastern countries, the state is now witnessing a dramatic pumping of labours from other states into its domestic economy. These manual-unskilled labourers, who are the age group of 15 to 40, migrated from backward states of the country like Bihar, West-Bengal, Assam, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, etc.... The first migrant labour flow into the state was from its neighbouring state, Tamil Nadu.

After one or two decades, these pioneers in the migrant labour market of Kerala have been almost vanished completely and got replaced by labourers from North-Eastern states. Migrant labourers are now present in almost all sectors of Kerala economy and their population is high in Perumbavoor of Ernakulam district and Payippad of Changanacherry Taluk in Kottayam district is ranked second. The positive and negative impact of migrant labourers in the construction industry in Kerala as well as in its economy and society, as a whole, is analysed through this study on the basis of the research conducted in the Changanacherry Taluk.

The project is to identify the socio-economic impact of migrant workers in Kerala. The major issue under consideration in the study is the positive and negative impact of migrant labourers, especially in the construction industry of Kerala and it is on the basis of a research in the Changanacherry Taluk.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 OBJECTIVES

- To identify various reasons for increased migrant labourers into the states of Kerala during recent years, especially, to the construction industry.
- To analyse the positive impact of migrant labourers in the construction industry to various parties involved such as contractors, customers, construction companies, etc....
- To critically analyse the negative impact of increased migrant labourers into the state in both social and economic aspects

3.2 Research Design

The data that will be used in the study include those collected from both primary and secondary sources; the primary data will be collected through questionnaires distributed among various individuals involved in the construction industry in Changanacherry Taluk. Secondary data sources include different websites, pdf files, and other materials available on the internet.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Migrant labourers in Kerala constitutes that a huge economic force in the state. According to study conducted in 2013, almost 2.5 million internal migrants are there in Kerala. Every year their number is increasing. This is reflected even in small changes taking place various parts of the state like appearance boards and banners in Hindi long with Malayalam, names of places translated to Hindi in private buses, etc. Migration to Kerala increases day by day due to many reasons. Major reason is the non-availability of unskilled manual workers in the state as the natives are ready to do only white collar jobs, high demand for migrant labourers due to low wages demanded by them, their willingness to work in any situation at any time, etc. Kerala became the Gulf for migrant labourers due to the comparatively high wages offered in the states, more exposure, large availability of jobs, etc. These workers are mostly from West Bengal, Assam, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, etc. They have created many social and economic impacts in the state. Many scholars have conducted studies regarding the Socio-Economic impact of migrant labourers in the state. The review of certain studies is being discussed below.

PUTHUMA JOY (April 2016). Migration is general, internal or inter-state, migration of labour is an old age phenomenon in India. People tend to migrate mainly because of two factors development-driven factors and distress factors. Nearly 25 lakhs

migrants are working in Kerala having a population of 3.33 billion and in contrast, nearly 22.8 lakhs Keralites are working abroad along with 10 lakhs in other states. West Bengal and Assam dominated the sources of migration to Kerala. Kerala economy depends upon migrant labourers due to the transfer of our labour force from farm employment to non-farm employment.

DILIP SAIKIA (November 2008). Today, the presence of migrant workers in Kerala's labour market is so visible that language spoken in many of the large scale construction sites is often not Malayalam, but Tamil, Hindi, Bengali, Assamese or Nepali. As per the study it has been identified that migrants from the same place prefer to stay together because workers migrated to Kerala through the information or help provided by their friends or relatives. It is also evident that if the migrants have earlier migration experience it will be easy for them to migrate to another place and also assimilate with the new conditions. Major overlapping reasons of migration are poor economic condition, low wages in native region, getting employment, meeting household expenditure, etc.

SREELATHA MENON (January 2013). Bengali migrants who call Kerala their 'Dubai' can be filling massive labour gap in the state Kerala. The study discusses matters pertaining to the benefits earned by the labourers and the government policies for them. Migrants are provided with free consultations and medicines in the government dispensaries. The building associations have ramped up the task of registering workers and providing health cards. The state government and trade union have introduced a new scheme for migrant worker's welfare where every contractor with more than five workers has to give their details to the Additional Labour Commissioner. Government issued notices to all builders to issue identity cards to the workers. More than 5 lakhs of migrants are there in the state, but there is nothing on government records.

KOUSIK DUTTA (January 2018). From 1960s, many workers from Kerala started to migrate to Gulf countries to earn a living. This gap was filled by labourers migrated to the state from other states such as Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, UP, etc.... According to the report of National Buildings Organisation (NBO), a government agency under the Ministry of Housing and Poverty Alleviation, wages of labourers, skilled and unskilled, was highest in the cities of Kerala between 2011 and 2013. The main reason behind this was the shortage of labour force, especially in Southern State. Many of these workers are not Bengalis, but are actually illegal migrants from Bangladesh, Myanmar, etc.... This is evident from the language they speak which is not real Hindi. Government reports shows that more than 1 lakh population living in any State get less wages or jobs when compared to population in different districts of Kerala. This factor mainly attracts migrant labour into the State in large number.

UDAYA S. MISHRA & S. IRUDAYA RAJAN (May 2018). According to Census of 1991 and 2001, out-migration from Kerala is much more than in-migration into the State. As per the study, the current stock of in-migrants into the state is estimated around 3.4 million. Such migrants belong to the ages 18-35 years and are mostly from states like Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, UP and other parts of India. The central districts of Kerala such as Ernakulam, Kottayam, etc... account for the large share of migration. Migration also has an impact on the household size as out-migrating households may have the absence of few members and in-migrating households need not necessarily be having all the household members along with them. It is evident from the study that non-migrant households are relatively large sized when compared with the migrant households.

Dr. B. PRADEEP KUMAR. Kerala, like the developed world, has become a place that attracts migrant workers and at the same time sending its own skilled and semi-skilled man power to other parts of the globe for more remittances. Main factors that result in the inflow of migrant workers into the state were the boom of the construction industry along with the reluctance of domestic workers to do manual and casual labour. Migrants are always considered alien by the natives of the state, at least during the initial decades of migration. Living conditions of migrants of the state is also not in a good state. As per the study, it is due to two main reasons. One their reluctances to pay more for better housing as they strive to save more. Two the contractor's disinterest in providing proper living condition for the migrant workers.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

Construction industry is the most important sector that promotes in-migration in the state of Kerala. Migrant labourers are now termed as the "City Builders" of the state. They play an important role in the infrastructural development in the state. In-migration of the labourers from weaker states of the country is also beneficial to those states as income is being transferred across states. Most of the migrant workers depend on the income they earn through manual unskilled labour in the state for meeting the basic needs of their families in the home state.

On the basis of a sample survey conducted among 60 samples in the Changanacherry Taluk in which the samples include construction contractors, shop keepers and households. The following data has been identified.

The survey shows that most of the migrants are from West Bengal that is, 43% of the migrant labourers from West Bengal, 17% are from Orissa, 20% are from Bihar and 20% are from other states of the country. As per the data, most of the labourers are from West Bengal. The major reason behind this is the increased unemployment and poverty in West Bengal when compared to other states in the country.

The study finds that, 17% of the respondents responded that there is a low increase in the number of manual workers they hire for manual labour, 30% responded that there is a moderate increase and 53% responded that there is a high increase in the number of workers they hire for manual labour. The major reason behind this is the increased availability of migrant labourers in the state at any time.

Among the migrant workers it shows that, 77% of the respondents agree that there is an increase in number of migrant workers in their locality or work site and 23% of the respondents do not agree that. There is a high increase in the number of migrant workers that people hire for manual labour. The increase is due to the increased supply of abundant migrant labourers and the low labour cost involved in hiring them.

Study shows that 37% of the respondents hire the migrant labourers mainly for cleaning, 23% hire for construction and 40% hire for other purposes. It shows that people hire migrant labourers mainly for other purposes. They are hired mostly for works other than construction and cleaning which includes painting, housekeeping, car washing, gardening etc. now because earlier they were hired mostly in the construction field and now there is excess supply of migrant labourers in construction and cleaning. So they take up other jobs to earn a living.

Study finds that, 70% of the respondents feel that migrant labourers demand more wages, 27% of them feel they demand better working conditions and only 3% of them feel that they demand other facilities. It shows that the major demand of the migrant labourers is higher wages. They demand more wage above all other factors because of the financial backwardness of their families residing in their native states and to meet the increasing living expenses in Kerala.

Study finds that 57% of the respondents feel that environment degradation is the most common negative impact of migrant workers colonies in their area, 33% of the respondents feels that it is public nuisance and 10% feel that there are other negative impacts. It shows that environment degradation is the most common negative impact of migrant worker colonies. This is caused by their negligence towards necessity of environment protection as well as health concerns. The lifestyles they follow in their states which are mostly backward also influence these kinds of behaviour.

Study shows that, 33% of the respondents face the problem of unknown language, 27% face the problem of lack of obedience and 40% face the problem of fraudulent practices of the migrant labourers. It shows that, major issue faced by people while dealing with migrant labourers is fraudulent practices. These fraudulent practices are followed by most of the migrant labourers due to their negative moral side and urge make more money to fund their other expenses apart from meeting basic needs and saving to supplement their families.

Data shows that, 20% of respondent's area has migrant workers below 50%, 27% of respondent's area has migrant workers from 50% to 80% and 53% of the respondent's area has migrant workers above 80%. Study shows that above 80% of labourers constitute migrant labourers in an area or locality. This is because of their willingness to do work for longer hours and cheap labour offered.

Data shows that, only 6% of the respondents think that the life style and health concerns of the migrant workers are good, 27% thinks that it is medium and 67% thinks that it is poor. It shows that the life style and health concerns of the migrant labourers are poor. This is mainly because most of the migrant labourers are illiterate and unaware about the importance of living under hygienic conditions

Study shows that 67% of the respondents feels that migrant labourers are more productive than the domestic labourers and 43% of them feels that domestic labourers are more productive. Data shows that migrant labourers are more productive than the domestic labourers. This is because the longer working hours, quality of work and less duration of rest when compared to the domestic labourers.

Study shows that 74% of the respondents think that migrant labourers have pushed the domestic labourers into unemployment and 26% of them think that migrant labourers did not push the domestic labourers into unemployment. It shows that more migrant labourers in the area or site pushed many domestic labourers into the situation of unemployment. This is because of the increased presence of migrant labourers in all fields of manual unskilled labour.

Data shows that 26% of the respondents feel that the initiative of the government to regulate the activities of migrant labourers is good, 17% feel they are average and 57% feel that they are poor. Study shows that the initiative of local government to regulate and control the activities of migrant labourers is poor. This is may be because of lack of adequate rules governing the activities of migrant labourers and ineffective implementation of existing regulations by the local authorities.

6. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Most of the labourers are from West Bengal. The major reason behind this is the increased unemployment and poverty in West Bengal when compared to other states in the country.
2. The most preferred age group of workers by the respondents is from 18-25 years. The major reason behind this the increased productivity and efficiency of labourers in the age group 18-25 years.
3. There is high increase in the number of migrant workers that people hire for manual labour. The major reason behind this is the increased availability of migrant labourers in the state at any time.
4. There is an increase in the number of migrant workers in the locality or work site. The increase is due to the increased supply of abundant migrant labourers and the low labour cost involved in hiring them.
5. People hire migrant labourers mainly for other purposes. They are hired mostly for works other than construction and cleaning which includes painting, housekeeping, car washing, gardening, etc.... Now because earlier they were hired mostly in the construction field and now there is excess supply of migrant labourers in construction and cleaning. So they take up other jobs to earn a living.
6. That the major demand of the migrant labourers is higher wages. They demand more wage above all other factors because of the financial backwardness of their families residing in their native states and to meet the increasing living expenses in Kerala.
7. Environment degradation is the most common negative impact of migrant worker colonies. This is caused by their negligence towards necessity of environment protection as well as health concerns. The life styles they follow in their states which are mostly backward also influence these kinds of behaviour.
8. Major issue faced by people while dealing with migrant labourers is fraudulent practices. These fraudulent practices are followed by most of the migrant labourers due to their negative moral side and urge make more money to fund their other expenses apart from meeting basic needs and saving to supplement their families.
9. Above 80% of labourers constitute migrant labourers in an area or locality. This is because of their willingness to do work for longer hours and cheap labour offered.
10. The life style and health concerns of the migrant labourers are poor. This is mainly because most of the migrant labourers are illiterate and unaware about the importance of living under hygienic conditions.
11. There is an increase in the crime rates in the locality due to the illegal activities of the migrant workers. This increase is due to the antisocial life style of the migrant labourers and their involvement in illegal activities with the aim to make more money.
12. Migrant labourers are more willing to work and faster in completing the work efficiently. The reason behind this is the necessity of the migrant labourers to work more and earn more to feed their families and the general non-lethargic attitude towards work
13. Migrant labourers are more productive than the domestic labourers. This is because the longer working hours, quality of work and less duration of rest when compared to the domestic labourers.
14. Domestic labourers are paid up to 10% more wages than the migrant labourers. This is because the labour cost in Kerala higher when compared to that in other states.
15. More migrant labourers in the area or site pushed many domestic labourers into the situation of unemployment. This is because of the increased presence of migrant labourers in all fields of manual unskilled labour.
16. People gain fair satisfaction or profit by employing migrant labourers to do work. This is because of their increased efficiency and productivity.
17. No better facilities should be provided to the migrant labourers in the locality. This opinion comes because even though better facilities are provided, migrant labourers are not comfortable and they personally prefer to live in their existing conditions.

18. The initiative of local government to regulate and control the activities of migrant labourers is poor. This is may be because of lack of adequate rules governing the activities of migrant labourers and ineffective implementation of existing regulations by the local authorities.
19. The major problem faced by the co-workers (domestic) of the migrant workers is sharing of resources. This problem is faced by most of the domestic workers because migrant labourers are more in number than the domestic workers in the site and there by the share of resources like wages, common facilities, food etc. of the domestic workers reduce.
20. The migrant labourers play major role in the growth of construction industry in the area. This opinion of the respondents is mainly because of the visible increase in the construction activities, faster completion of construction projects and also the rapid emergence of more construction companies into the industry after the migration more workers from other states.
21. People do not support more migration of labourers from other states. The main reason behind this is that the population of migrant labourers in the state is already large. More migrant labourers result in more sharing of resources with them and more social and economic issues created by them.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The research is based on “Socio-economic impact of migrant workers in Kerala” especially in Changanacherry – Payippad Taluk. Migration means a way to move from one place to another in order to live and work. So the level of migration in Kerala is increasing day by day. The reasons for increasing migration in Kerala are because of good climate conditions and higher wage benefits. The main purpose of our study are; to identify various reasons for increased migrant workers into the state during recent years especially to construction industry, to analyse the positive impact of demigration in the construction industries to various parties involved such as contractors, customers, construction companies, etc... and to critically analyse the negative impact of increased demigration into the state both social and economic aspects.

The above purpose arrived to the conclusion that the 43% of the migrant labourers are from west Bengal, 17% are from Orissa, 20% are from Bihar and 20% are from other states of the country. They are not only based on construction industries but also cleaning, gardening and flour mills. They also work as domestic help masons, carpenters and barbers. So the government should improve their legal records about the migrant workers background, the existing workers working conditions, etc... and also to reduce the flow of migrants from other countries. So that to effectively utilise our plenty of resources and provide good job opportunities and finance to the domestic workers and lowering down the unemployment problems and improve the standard of living to the Indian people.

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