

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE MIGRANT WORKERS IN KERALA: A STUDY IN THE TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, Kerala has been experiencing a large influx of migrant workers from different parts of India. Higher wages, large employment opportunities and shortages of local labourers make Kerala a lucrative job market for workers from outside the State. The purpose of this paper is to examine the characteristics and economic condition of the migrant workers in Kerala. Based on data from a sample survey of 166 migrant workers, carried out during September-October, 2008 in the Trivandrum district of Kerala, this paper analyses the migrant's demographic and household details, reasons for migration, sources of information, living conditions, occupational pattern, wage and income, consumption and savings, and remittances, etc.

Keywords: Consumption expenditure, internal migration, Kerala, network, reason for migration, remittances.

INTRODUCTION

Kerala, widely known for exporting labour to the Gulf countries (Kannan and Hari, 2002; Rajan and James, 2007; Zachariah et al., 2000, 2001; Zachariah and Rajan, 2004, 2007, 2008), has now been witnessing large influx of migrant labour from different parts of the country (Surabhi and Kumar, 2007). The *Kerala Migration Survey 2007*, conducted by Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, estimates that about 18.5 lakh Keralites was living abroad and total remittances to Kerala was about Rs. 24.53 thousand crores, which was about 20.2 percent of Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) of the State (Zachariah and Rajan, 2008). While the outmigration of labour from the State has a number of positive effects on the socio-economic arena and labour market of Kerala economy,¹ the large scale out-migration of labour has created severe scarcity of semi-skilled and un-skilled workers in almost all spheres of the State. At the same time, the real estate and construction sector boom in Kerala has led to huge demand for certain categories of workers such as carpenters, welders, plumbers, drivers, electrician, motor mechanics and other craftsman. This has led to an inevitable rise in the wage rate in the State,² which turned Kerala into a lucrative job market for workers hailing from various parts of India, mostly from Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, and from nearby countries like Nepal and Bangladesh. 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.

Available data shows massive inflow of migrants from other states into Kerala. As per the Census 2001, total number of migrants (by place of birth) from other States in Kerala recorded at 4.13 lakh, which was 1.3 percent of Kerala's total population. The National Sample Survey (NSS) data on Migration in India, which defines migration on the basis of last place of residence and thus differs from Census data, shows that total number of migrants in Kerala numbered 10.05 lakh in 1999-2000 and 10.69 lakh in 2007-08 (NSSO, 2010). These migrant workers, which include unskilled and semi-skilled workers like carpenters, masons, mechanics, electricians and barbers, etc., are mostly employed in the informal sectors such as construction, hotels and restaurants, business, small manufacturing units, and more recently in the farm sector too. As such, the migrant workers have become the backbone of Kerala's

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growing economy and without them the wheel of the State economy would not move.

The migration of labourer has a far-reaching impact – both direct and indirect – on the migrant's household as well as at both origin and destination economy.³ Remittances send by the migrants have direct effect on livelihoods of the migrant's family by significantly improving their consumption pattern, increasing savings and investment, improving standard of living, reducing poverty and providing a social security mechanism for poor households, etc.; together with reduced unemployment rate in the native economy.

Against this backdrop, this paper examines the characteristics and economic condition of migrant workers in the Trivandrum district of Kerala. More precisely the major objectives of the study are:

- a) To analyse the characteristics and economic conditions of migrant workers in Trivandrum district of Kerala.
- b) To investigate the sources and reasons of migration to Kerala.
- c) To examine the flow of remittances and its impact on local economy.

The rest of the paper is organised in the following sections. The next section describes the data used in this paper, followed by the findings of the study. The last section concludes our discussion.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The data used in this paper is based on a primary survey on the migrant workers in the Trivandrum district of Kerala (India), which has been carried out during September-October, 2008. We have selected the Trivandrum district for our survey, keeping the fact in mind that it is the capital city of the State of Kerala, and as per the Census 2001, it accommodates about 11.77 percent of total in-migrants in Kerala, which is the third highest among the districts of Kerala.⁴ A major problem faced during the survey was to find out the migrant workers in the district. For this, we have taken the help of the local people to find out the places where the migrant workers have been working and the places where they have been staying. Finally, data has been collected by visiting both the places – working sites and residence – whichever found convenient. Information has been collected on various migration particulars such as migrant's demographic and household details, the reasons of migration, sources of information, living conditions, past and present occupational pattern, wage and income level, consumption and savings pattern, remittances, etc. Information has been recorded for the previous one week as well as for the previous month from the date of the survey, wherever necessary. A total of 166 migrant workers have been interviewed by using a pre-tested semi-structured questionnaire.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Age-Sex Composition of Sample Migrants

The sample is comprised of relatively young migrant workers. The average age of the migrants is 26.42 years, with about 25.3 percent of migrants below 20 years and another 32.5 percent are between 21-25 years (Table 1). All the sample migrants are male.

Table 1: Age Composition of the Sample Migrants

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
15-20 years	42	25.3
21-25 years	54	32.5
26-30 years	33	19.9
31-35 years	14	8.4
36-40 years	12	7.2
41 years and above	11	6.6
Total	166	100.0

Educational Level

About 16.3 percent of respondents have no formal education, 29.5 percent have primary education and 53.6 percent have secondary education and one respondent has graduation degree (Table 2).

Table 2: Educational Level of the Migrants

Level of Schooling	Frequency	Percent
No formal schooling	27	16.3
Primary education	49	29.5
Secondary education	89	53.6
Graduation	1	0.6
Total	166	100.0

Religion and Caste

The social group composition reveals that Schedule Caste (SC) migrants dominate the sample. About 47 percent of respondents belong to SC category, whereas General, OBC and Schedule Tribes (ST) account for 7.2 percent, 7.8 percent and 6.0 percent, respectively. About 96.4 percent of respondents are Hindu and the remaining 3.6 percent are Muslim.

Table 3: Distribution of Migrants by Castes Groups

Category	Frequency	Percent
Schedule Caste	78	47.0
Schedule Tribes	10	6.0
OBC	13	7.8
General	12	7.2
Don't Know	53	31.9
Total	166	100.0

Marital Status and Family Size

About two-third of the respondents are unmarried, while 34.9 percent are married, one worker is widowed and another one is separated. The average family size is 5 persons. More than three fourth of the respondents have a relatively smaller family size of below 6 persons.

Table 4: Distribution of Migrants by Marital Status

Category	Frequency	Percent
Never married	106	63.9
Currently married	58	34.9
Widowed	1	0.6
Separated	1	0.6
Total	166	100

Table 5: Distribution of Migrants by Family size

No. of household members	Frequency	Percent
1-3	25	15.10
4 - 6	104	62.70
7 - 8	29	17.40
9 & more	8	4.80
Total	166	100.00

Earning Members and Dependents in the Family

Looking at the earning member in the family (excluding the respondent), about 24 percent of the respondents have no earning member, 58.4 percent have less than two earning members, and 16.87 percent have more than three earning members in their family (Table 6). About 53.6 percent of the respondents have no dependent children (below age 14 years) at home, whereas about 13.3 percent have one, 20.5 percent have two and 12.60 percent have more than 3 dependent children at home (Table 7). For 84 percent of the respondents, the respondent is the only migrant in the family, while the remaining 16 percent have at least one migrant in the family. When the respondents were asked whether they want any other member of their family to migrate with them, about 88 percent said no.

Table 6: Distribution of Migrants by Number of Earning Member in the Family

No. of Earning Member	Frequency	Percent
0	41	24.7
1-2	97	58.4
3-4	24	14.5
More than 4	4	2.4
Total	166	100.0

Table 7: Distribution of Migrants by the number of Dependent Children

No. of Dependent Children	Frequency	Percent
0	89	53.6
1	22	13.3
2	34	20.5
3 & above	21	12.7
Total	166	100.0

Place of Origin

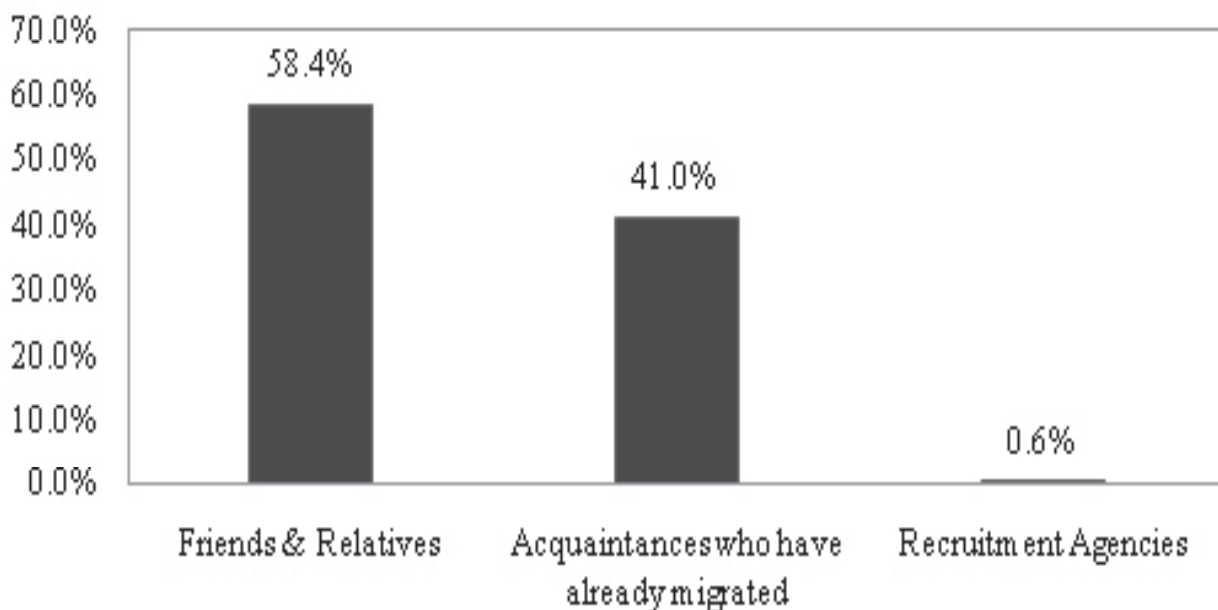
Table 8 provides the details about the native State of the migrants. Migrants from West Bengal constitute more than half (58 percent) of the sample, while another 37.3 percent of respondents are from Assam. Thus, about 95 percent of the migrants are from West Bengal and Assam, while Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Orissa each have two migrants in our sample. This, however, does not imply that the migrant workers in Trivandrum are dominated by workers from West Bengal and Assam. The concentration of migrants from West Bengal and Assam in our sample is high possibly due to the reason that the area that we surveyed was dominated by migrants from these two States. This is not surprising, because migrants from the same place prefer to stay in the same locality.

Table 8: State of Origin of the Migrants

States	Frequency	Percent
West Bengal	96	57.8
Assam	62	37.3
Andhra Pradesh	2	1.2
Uttar Pradesh	2	1.2
Tamil Nadu	2	1.2
Orissa	2	1.2
Total	166	100.0

Networking

The migrant workers have come to Kerala on their own without the help of formal agents. The informal network plays important role in migration of workers to Kerala. All the respondents migrated to Kerala through information and help from their friends/relatives (58 percent) and acquaintances (41 percent) who have already migrated to Kerala (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Source of Information of Migration Opportunities**

Number of Years Living in Kerala

About two third of respondents migrated to Kerala for the first time, whereas the rest had prior migration experience to States like Karnataka, Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Goa and Jammu & Kashmir. Two respondents had also been to other countries like Nepal and Bhutan. About two third of the respondents first migrated after 2006, 23.49 percent had first migrated in between 2001-2005 and 11.43 percent had first migrated before 2000 (Table 9).

Table 9: Year of First Migration

Year	Frequency	Percent
1990-1995	6	3.6
1996-2000	13	7.8
2001-2005	39	23.5
after 2006	108	65.1
Total	166	100.0

Table 10 reports the number of years that the respondents have been living in Kerala. About 50 percent respondents have migrated to Kerala within one year, 28 percent migrated within 2-3 years, 17.5 percent migrated within 4-8 years and 4.2 percent migrated before 9 years. However, those who have migrated to Kerala long back have not entirely been in Trivandrum, but they also moved to other districts of Kerala such as Ernakulam, Idukki, Palakkad, Kasargod, Kollam, Aleppey, etc. for work.

Table 10: Number of years living in Kerala

Years	Frequency	Percent
0-1 year	82	49.4
2-3 years	48	28.9
4-8 years	29	17.5
9 years & above	7	4.2
Total	166	100.0

Reasons of Migration

The major reasons of migration are the poor economic condition and low wages in native region. About 76 percent respondents reported the reason of migration as getting employment/better employment, another 46 percent reported as meeting household expenditure and 33.73 percent reported as accumulation of savings (Table 11). The other reasons mentioned were repayment of debts, financing education of dependents and marriage of dependents, etc. This suggests that migration mostly occurs for the creation of outside support system for livelihood. Further, dominance of economic reasons also suggests that it is primarily the differences in economic opportunities between different States that pushed for migration of workers to other States.

Table 11: Reasons of Migration

Reasons of Migration	Frequency	Percent
Get employment/better employment	126	75.9
Meeting household expenditure	77	46.4
Accumulate savings	56	33.7
Repayment of debt	12	7.2
Marriage & Financing education of the dependents	14	8.4
Purchase of land/ Construction of house	1	0.6
Total	166	100.0
<i>Note:</i> The summation is higher than the reported total because of multiple responses.		

When asked about the specific reasons for migrating to Kerala, about 90 percent respondents reported that they migrated to Kerala specifically because of higher wage rate in Kerala, whereas 12.65 percent reported availability of work and another 7.83 percent reported better working condition in Kerala as the main reasons for migration to Kerala (Table 12). A few respondents, who have prior experience of migration to other places, reported that they consider Kerala as a more secure place than other places.

Table 12: Major Reasons of Migration to Kerala

Reasons of Migration to Kerala	Frequency	Percent
High wage rate	150	90.4
Availability of work	21	12.7
Better Working condition	13	7.8
Accumulation of Savings & repayment of debt	6	3.6
Relatives and Acquaintances working in Kerala	10	6.0
Others	6	3.6
Total	166	100.0
<i>Note:</i> The summation is higher than the reported total because of multiple responses.		

Occupation – Before and After Migration

Before migration to Kerala, about 12.7 percent of the respondents were unemployed and another 4.2 percent were students, whereas about 36 percent were employed in the informal sector, 27 percent were self-employed in agriculture and 20 percent were self-employed in the non-agricultural sector (Table 13). However, there has been barely any improvement in the nature of works even after the migration. Almost all the respondents are engaged in temporary work. None of the respondents have registered to any employment agency. Instead, they have engaged in some kind of informal agreement with contractors in various construction sites. About 90.4 percent respondents are engaged in such work agreements. The remaining 9.6 percent of respondents, who are working independently, either went to different work places in search of work or used to stand in some market places from where somebody picked them up for work. It is found that about 12.65 percent respondents are working as mason and another 71 percent are working as helper to mason in various construction sites. The other activities that the respondents were engaged are bricks maker, casual laborer, carpenter & painting, truck helper, etc. (Table 14).

Table 13: Primary Occupation of the Migrants before Migration

Category	Frequency	Percent
Students	7	4.2
Unemployed	21	12.7
Employed in informal sector	60	36.1
Self-employed in agriculture	45	27.1
Self-employed in non-agricultural sector	33	19.9
Total	166	100.0

Table 14: Type of Activity of the Migrants after Migration

Category	Frequency	Percent
Bricks maker	8	4.8
Contraction mason	21	12.7
Construction helper	118	71.1
Casual labor	10	6.0
Truck helper	4	2.4
Carpenter & Painting	5	3.0
Total	166	100.0

Skill Level – Before and After Migration

Of the workers who were employed before migration to Kerala, only about one fourth of them were engaged in activities where some kind of skill is required. Before migration about 74.7 percent respondents were engaged in unskilled activities, 10.8 percent were engaged in semi-skilled activities and 14.5 percent were engaged in skilled activities (Table 15). After migration, about 70.4 percent respondents were engaged in unskilled activities, while about 15 percent respondents were engaged in semi-skilled and skilled activities each (Table 15). Looking at the mobility of the skill level after migration, it is noticed that out of the 20 respondents engaged in skilled activities before migration, 10 are still working in skilled activities, but 2 of them are working in the semi-skilled and 6 are working in the unskilled activities (Table 16). It implies that of the skilled workers before migration 50 percent have moved downward in skill level after migration. Similarly, out of the 15 respondents engaged in semi-skilled activities before migration, 7 are still working in the semi-skilled activities, one moved upward to skilled activities, but the remaining 7 moved downward to unskilled activities after migration. Again, out of the 103 respondents engaged in unskilled activities before migration, 9 moved upward to skilled activities, 12 moved upward to the semi-skilled activities, while the remaining 82 are still working in the unskilled activities after migration. Of the 28 respondents who were unemployed and students before migration, 22 are working in the unskilled activities, 2 in the semi-skilled activities and 4 are working in the skilled activities. Thus, there are both upward and downward mobility of the workers in nature of work they engaged after migration. However, a larger proportion of workers in each type of skill level remained in the same skill level after migration.

Table 15: Skill Level - Before and After Migration

Category	Before Migration		After Migration	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Unskilled work	103	74.7	117	70.4
Semi-skilled work	15	10.8	25	15.1
Skilled work	20	14.5	24	14.5
Total	138	100.0	166	100.0

Table 16: Migrants by Skill Level before and after Migration

Skill Level before Migration	Skill Level after Migration			Total
	Skilled	Semi-skilled	Unskilled	
Unemployed & Students	4 (14.3)	2 (7.1)	22 (78.6)	28 (100.0)
Skilled	10 (50.0)	4 (20.0)	6 (30.0)	20 (100.0)
Semi skilled	1 (6.7)	7 (46.7)	7 (46.7)	15 (100.0)
Unskilled	9 (8.7)	12 (11.7)	82 (79.6)	103 (100.0)
Total	24 (14.5)	25 (15.1)	117 (70.5)	166 (100.0)
Note: Figures within the bracket shows the row percentage.				

Wages and Income Level of the Migrants

After migration, the migrants received an average daily wage of about Rs. 232, with maximum of Rs. 350 and minimum of Rs. 100. This was three to four times higher than the wage rates in the native places of the migrants. The average number of working days for the migrants is 24 days per month, with maximum of 30 days and minimum of 15 days per month. Since most of the respondents are engaged in temporary activities, the mode of payment for about 72 percent respondents is daily basis and for another 21 percent is weekly basis.

The income level of the migrants before migration is reported in Table 17. Before migration about 13.7 percent respondents have monthly income less than Rs. 1000 and for another 36 percent monthly income was less than Rs. 2000. For 42.4 percent respondents, the monthly income was between Rs. 2000-3499, whereas only for 8 percent the monthly income was more than Rs. 3500 before migration.

The average monthly income of the workers after migration is found to be Rs. 6000. For more than two third of respondents, the monthly income is more than Rs. 5000 after migration as against only 2.2 percent before migration. Only about 3.6 percent respondents earned less than Rs. 3500 per month, but higher than Rs. 2000 (Table 17).

Table 17: Monthly Income of the Migrants

Category	Before Migration		After Migration	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Rs. 999 & below	19	13.7	0	0.0
Rs. 1000-1999	50	36.0	0	0.0
Rs. 2000-3499	59	42.4	6	3.6
Rs. 3500-4999	8	5.8	46	27.7
Rs. 5000-6999	3	2.2	92	55.4
Rs. 7000 & above	0	0.0	22	13.3
Total	138*	100.0	166	100.0
Note: * The total is 138 in this case because 28 workers were either student or unemployed, and hence, they had no income.				

A comparison of the income level before and after migration is worthwhile at this point to infer whether migration really makes difference in the financial well being of the migrants. However, such a comparison is difficult as information on income before migration is not available for all the respondents,⁵ and as some respondents had migrated more than 15-17 years earlier, so comparing their income at that time with current income without adjustment of the price level is difficult. Despite this limitation, a close look at the income levels before and after

migration (Table 17) reveals that there has been a shift from the low-income brackets to the high-income brackets after migration. Thus, it can be inferred that migration really improved the financial position of the respondents.

Living Conditions

Notwithstanding a reasonably good level of income after migration; most of the respondents are living in deplorable conditions. About 44 percent of the respondents reside at the working sites and the remaining 56 percent reside in poor rented houses with single room shared by many. About 91.6 percent of the respondents live with other migrants and cook together, while only 8.4 percent stays alone (Figure 2). In most of the cases there is no provision of hygienic sanitation and safe drinking water.

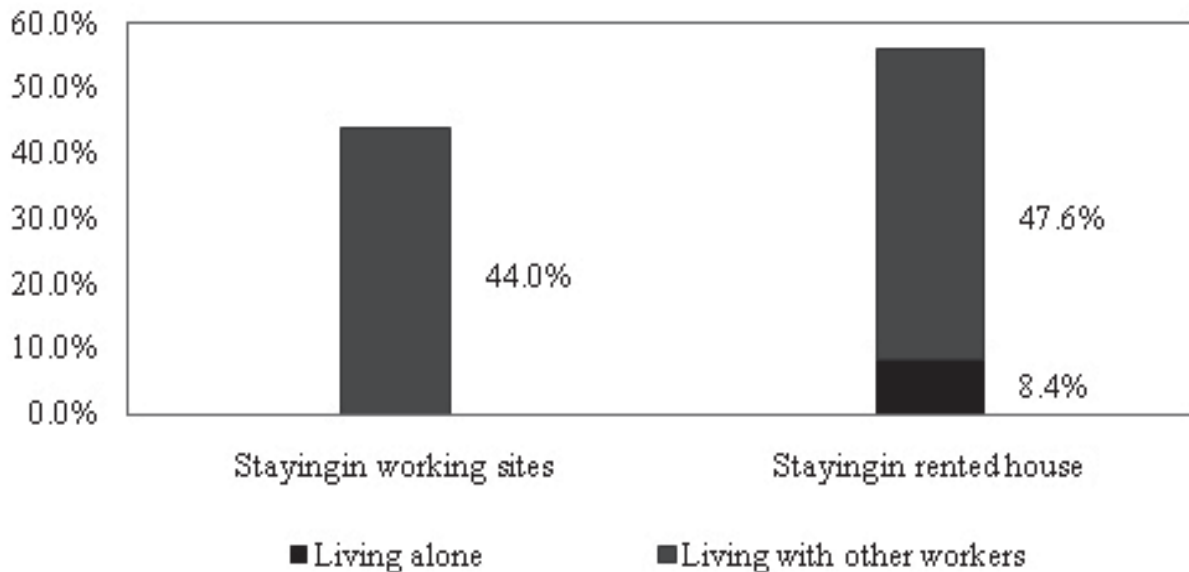


Figure 2: Living Conditions of the Migrants

Consumption Expenditure

The average monthly expenditure of the respondents is Rs. 2160. For 18.1 percent respondents, the average monthly expenditure is less than Rs. 1500, while for 54.8 percent it ranges between Rs. 1501-2500 and for 11.4 percent it is more than Rs. 3000 (Table 18). The average monthly food expenditure is Rs. 1290 and non-food expenditure is Rs. 870. The amount and component food expenditure is found to be more or less same for all the respondents. This is mainly because of the fact that more than 90 percent respondents stayed and cooked together. But, the non-food expenditure varies from person to person. The coefficient of variation of food expenditure is found to be 0.21, whereas it is 0.79 in case of non-food expenditure.

Table 18: Monthly Expenditure of the Migrants

Expenditure Level (Rs.)	Frequency	Percent
Less than Rs. 1500	30	18.1
Rs. 1501- 2000	52	31.3
Rs. 2001- 2500	39	23.5
Rs. 2501- 3000	26	15.7
Rs. 3001 & above	19	11.4
Total	166	100.0

Savings and Investments

The savings habit among the migrant workers is very small. More than 73 percent of the respondents do not have any savings in Kerala— whatever they can save from their income they sent them to home. Of the 27 percent who have some amount of savings in Kerala – either in bank or chitty/kuris – for about 13.86 percent total savings is less than Rs. 3000, for 7.23 percent it is between Rs. 3000-5000 and for 3.6 percent more than Rs. 10000. Similarly, the respondents hardly invest their money in Kerala. Only 5 out of 166 respondents have invested their money either in buying land, construction of house, or starting business.

Possession of Consumer Durables

Regarding the possession of consumer durables, about 21 percent respondents have mobile phone, while 5.42 percent have TV (in the group) and 1.8 percent have music player in Trivandrum (Table 19).

Table 19: Possession of Consumer Durables

Consumer Durables	Frequency	Percent
No	119	71.7
Mobile phone	35	21.1
TV (in the group)	9	5.4
Music player	3	1.8
Total	166	100.0

Remittances

Remittances link migration and development of backward region from where migration does take place. Migration can have a direct effect on peoples' livelihoods, to the extent that migrants send money to their families to sustain livelihoods and social relations. It is by the remittances that migration acts as a social security mechanism for the poor households left back. We found that the average remittance sent by the migrants is Rs. 2541 per migrant in the last month and Rs. 26328 per migrant in the preceding year. About one fourth respondents did not send money to home in the last month, whereas 28.31 percent respondents sent between Rs. 1000-2000, 24.7 percent respondents sent between Rs. 2001-3500 and about one fifth respondents sent more than Rs. 3500 in the last month (Table 20).

Table 20: Remittances Sent to Home in the Last Month

Amount (Rs.)	Frequency	Percent
Not send yet	42	25.3
Rs. 1000-2000	47	28.3
Rs. 2001-3500	41	24.7
Rs. 3501-6000	30	18.1
Rs. 6001 & above	6	3.6
Total	166	100.0

We also look at the frequency of sending remittances, as it influences the spending of remittances. About 22.29 percent respondents sent remittances monthly and another 42.77 percent respondents sent remittances at an interval of 2-3 months, whereas 12 percent respondents sent once in a year and 14.46 percent have never sent money to home (Table 21).⁶ About 58 percent of the respondents sent money through bank accounts of family members and friends/relatives, 26.8 percent sent by money order and post office, and 15.2 percent sent through fellow migrant workers who are in Trivandrum (Table 22).

Table 21: Frequency of Sending Remittances to Home

Frequency	Frequency	Percent
Monthly	37	22.3
Once in 2-3 months	71	42.8
Once in 3-4 months	14	8.4
Once in a year	6	3.6
Only once after migration	14	8.4
Not sent yet	24	14.5
Total	166	100.0

Table 22: Mode of Sending Remittances

	Frequency	Percent
Bank Account	80	58.0
Money Order	31	22.5
Post Office	6	4.3
Through fellow migrant workers	21	15.2
Total	138	100.0

The developmental potential of remittances can be accessed through investment out of remittances. If remittances are used for productive purposes then it will lead to economic well-being of the family as well as the region. About 80 percent respondents reported that remittances are mainly used for meeting household expenditure. However, some respondents also reported regular investment in agriculture, education of dependent, buying land & building house (Table 23).

Table 23: Areas of Spending Remittances

Area of Spending	Frequency	Percent
Household expenditure	132	79.4
Expenditure in agriculture	8	4.8
Expenditure in education of dependent	14	8.4
Repayment of debt	11	6.6
Marriage and other Social functions	3	1.8
Buying land and building house	6	3.6
Saving and others	4	2.4
Don't know	10	6.0
Total	166	100.0
<i>Note:</i> The summation is higher than the reported total because of multiple responses.		

CONCLUSION

The objective of this paper is to analyze the characteristics and economic conditions of migrant workers in the Trivandrum district of Kerala. The analysis is based on data from a sample survey of 166 migrant workers in the Trivandrum district, which was carried out during September-October, 2008. A relatively younger bunch of unskilled and semi-skilled migrant workers, with different educational level and diverse socio-economic background, mostly from the far-flung states of West Bengal and Assam constituted the sample migrants in our study. The major reason for migration of these workers is the poor economic condition, lack of sufficient employment opportunities and low wages in their native place; whereas higher wages, availability of work and better working condition are reported as the major reasons for migration to Kerala. Informal network through friends/relatives and acquaintances who have already migrated to Kerala plays important role in migration of workers to Kerala.

It is found that the nature of employment of the workers has barely changed even after migration. Almost all the migrants are engaged in temporary work and none of them have registered in any employment agency, rather they have made some kind of informal contract with contractors/employers. More than two thirds of the migrants are employed in various menial works such as construction helper, bricks maker, casual laborer, carpenter, truck helper, etc.

The migrants earn a sufficiently higher wage in Kerala, which is, in some cases, more than three-four times higher than the wages in their native places. Although the income level of the migrants has increased, but most of them are living in deplorable conditions. Almost all the migrants used to stay together with other migrants – either at the work sites or rented houses – with one room shared by many and no provision of hygiene, sanitation and safe drinking water. Since, almost all migrants stay and cook together, food expenditure is found to be more or less same for all of them, but the non-food expenditure varies from person to person. The savings and investment habit among the migrants is found to be very poor. The average remittance sent by the migrants was Rs. 26328 per migrant in the preceding year. A larger proportion of these remittances are used for meeting household expenditure, very little is invested in agriculture, education of dependent or buying land and building house.

NOTES

1. The most prominent positive impacts of labour outmigration on Kerala economy are contribution to State income; increasing consumption, savings and investment; enhancing the quality of life and contribution to a high human development; reducing poverty and relative deprivation, etc. The major impact on the labour market is the reduction of unemployment through migration of unemployed youths and non-agricultural labourer. (See Kannan and Hari, 2002; Rajan and James, 2007; Zachariah et al., 2000, 2001; Zachariah and Rajan, 2004, 2007, 2008 for further discussion on this).
2. At the time of survey, the wage rate in Kerala was highest among the States in India. The daily wage of construction workers in Kerala was pegged between Rs. 250-350 in 2001, as against Rs. 71 in West Bengal, Rs. 55 in Tripura and Rs. 47 in Madhya Pradesh. (Source: http://labourbureau.nic.in/WRI-2003-04_percent-20Tables.htm).
3. For a detail discussion on this, see Zachariah *et al.* (2000, 2001), Zachariah and Rajan (2007) and Kannan and Hari (2002), among others.
4. As per Census 2001, only two districts, namely Ernakulam and Idukki, received more inflow of migrants (13.56 percent and 12.85 percent respectively) than Trivandrum district.
5. This is because some respondents reported their income level before migration as 'subsistence income from agriculture'.
6. In order to find out why the 24 migrants (14.46 percent) had not sent money to home, we cross-classified migrants with respect to the frequency of sending money and the instance of migration in Kerala, which shows that the migrants who had not sent money to home had very recently (within 1-3 months) migrated to Kerala, and therefore, they were not able to accumulate sufficient money to send home.

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