

# **Interregional migration from Eastern States to Kerala:**

## **A Socio Economic Analysis**

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## Contents

<b>Preliminary Pages</b>		<b>1-8</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>		<b>9-16</b>
<b>Chapters</b>		
<b>Chapter - 1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>17-29</b>
<b>Chapter - 2</b>	<b>Factors and Determinants of Migration to Kerala</b>	<b>30-37</b>
<b>Chapter - 3</b>	<b>Channels of Migration and Profile of Migrants</b>	<b>38-53</b>
<b>Chapter - 4</b>	<b>Major Problems of Migrant Laborers in Kerala</b>	<b>54-66</b>
<b>Chapter -5</b>	<b>Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	<b>67-79</b>
	<b>References</b>	<b>80-81</b>
<b>Annexures</b>		<b>82-93</b>
<b>Annexure-1</b>	<b>Schedule/ Questionnaire for Domestic Migrants in Kerala</b>	<b>82-86</b>
<b>Annexure-2</b>	<b>Schedule/ Questionnaire for Employer of Domestic Migrant Labourers in Kerala</b>	<b>87-89</b>
<b>Annexure-3</b>	<b>Schedule/ Questionnaire for State Officials/ Elected Representatives and officials of Panchayat/ Municipality/Corporation in Kerala</b>	<b>90-91</b>
<b>Annexure-4</b>	<b>Schedule/ Questionnaire for Local Labourers in Kerala</b>	<b>92-93</b>

## Abbreviations

DML	Domestic Migrant Labourer
RTE	Right to Education Act
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
BP	Block Panchayat
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GP	Gram Panchayat
GS	Gram Sabha
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NRLM	National Rural Livelihood Mission
OBC	Other Backward Classes

## List of Tables

<b>Table No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>Table 1.1</b>	<b>Selection of Districts in Kerala and Respondents for Field Study</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Table 1.2</b>	<b>Field Survey in Kerala : Distribution of Respondents</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Table 1.3</b>	<b>Interview and Meetings in Home States and Kerala</b>	<b>24-25</b>
<b>Table 1.4</b>	<b>Focus Groups Discussions in Home States and Kerala</b>	<b>26-28</b>
<b>Table 2.1</b>	<b>Selected Indicators of Kerala and States of origin</b>	<b>31-32</b>
<b>Table 2.2</b>	<b>Push and Pull Factors of Migration to Kerala : Responses of DML</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Table 3.1</b>	<b>Channels of Migration to Kerala: Aggregate Level</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Table 3.2</b>	<b>Channels of Migration to Kerala: State wise Analysis</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Table 3.3</b>	<b>Distribution of DML by State of Origin</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Table 3.4</b>	<b>Age wise Distribution of DML in Kerala</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Table 3.5</b>	<b>Age wise Distribution of DML in Kerala by State of Origin</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Table 3.6</b>	<b>Religion : Distribution of DML in Kerala</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Table 3.7</b>	<b>Distribution of DML by State of Origin and Religion</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Table :3.8</b>	<b>Castes: Distribution of DML in Kerala</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Table 3.9</b>	<b>Employer Pattern of DML in Kerala</b>	<b>46</b>

<b>Table No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>Table: 3.10</b>	<b>Distribution of DML by Employer Pattern and by State of Origin</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Table 3.11</b>	<b>Skilled and Unskilled DML: Sector wise Analysis</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Table 3.12</b>	<b>Number of Days of Employment in a Week</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Table 3.13</b>	<b>Daily Wage of Migrant Labourer</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Table 3.14</b>	<b>Wages and Schemes: Awareness Level of DML</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Table 3.15</b>	<b>Period of Stay in Kerala</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Table 3.16</b>	<b>Income and Expenditure Pattern of Migrant Laborers in Kerala</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Table 4.1</b>	<b>Problems of Migrant Laborers in Kerala Reported by Four Categories of Respondents</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Table 4.2</b>	<b>Death Rate of DML in Kerala</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Table 4.3</b>	<b>Pattern of Rental Accommodation</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Table 4.4</b>	<b>Identity Cards of DML in Home States and Kerala: Aggregate Level</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Table 4.5</b>	<b>Identity Cards of DML in Home States and Kerala: Document Wise</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Table 4.6</b>	<b>Forms of Prejudices/ Discrimination: Responses of Four categories of Responders</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Table 5.1</b>	<b>Model of an Institutional Mechanism in Kerala</b>	<b>74-77</b>
<b>Table 5.2</b>	<b>Role of Government of India and Home States in the Model Institutional Mechanism in Kerala</b>	<b>77-79</b>

## List of Figures

Figure No.	Figure	Page No.
Figure 3.1	Distribution of DMLs by Channels of Migration and State of Origin	40
Figure 3.2	Distribution of DML by State of Origin and Age	41
Figure 3.3	Distribution of DML by State of Origin and Religion	43
Figure 3.4	Distribution of DML by Employer Pattern and by State of Origin	47
Figure 3.5	Number of Days of Employment in a Week	48
Figure 3.6	Daily Wage of Migrant Labourer	49
Figure 3.7	Duration of Stay in Kerala	52
Figure: 3.8	Income and Expenditure Pattern of Migrant Laborers in Kerala	53

## List of Boxes

<b>Box No.</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>Box 2.1</b>	<b>Case study of Migrant Labourer from Odisha</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Box 3.1</b>	<b>SSLC Performance of Children of Migrant Labourer from Bihar</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Box 3.2</b>	<b>SSLC 2014: Excellent Performance of two sons of Migrant Labourer from Bihar</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Box 4.1</b>	<b>Poorly Maintained Labour Camp closed by the District Administration in Kochi</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Box 4.2</b>	<b>Medical Camp and Registration of Migrant Laborers with Police Station : A Joint initiatives of Panchayats and Municipalities</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Box 4.3</b>	<b>Labour Camps Exposed to High Risks in Perumbavoor in Ernakulam District</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Box 4.4</b>	<b>HAMARAH- Identity Card issued by the District Medical Office Malapuram</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Box 4.5</b>	<b>Membership Card for Migrant Labourers: Role of Trade Union</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Box 4.6</b>	<b>Inflow of Migrants to Kerala and Drug Trafficking and other Criminal Activities: Concern of Government of Kerala</b>	<b>65</b>



## **Executive Summary**

This is a modest attempt to study various aspects of the complex issues of domestic migrant labourers in Kerala. It aims to enable various government authorities to formulate and implement an action plan to address various problems of domestic migrant labourers in Kerala. Since critical issues concerning the interstate migrants remain untouched now, the present study provides a roadmap for interventions by government of Kerala, government of India and government of various States which supply migrant labourers.

### **1.1 Major Objectives of the Study**

The major objectives of the study are to:

- examine the socio-economic characteristics of interstate migrants
- study the supply chain of migrants
- identify the factors influencing their decision to migrate to Kerala
- understand working and living conditions of interstate migrants in Kerala
- analyze various socio-economic, occupational and health issues of interstate migrants
- assess the social integration of migrants with the residents
- examine the role of Panchayats and Municipalities in addressing the problem of migrants.
- identify welfare and social security provisions for migrant workers.
- critically analyze need for special intervention for the upliftment and welfare of migrant workers through government programmes
- suggest measures for enhancing the welfare of interstate migrants in Kerala.

The output of the study is as the following:

1. Identification of factors influencing the labourers to migrate to Kerala
2. Identification of factors influencing the acceptability of these labourers in Kerala
3. Identification of region or regions / the state or states from which maximum migration is taking place
4. Suggestions on how to reduce the vulnerability of migrant workers
5. Recommendation of a model of an institutional mechanism for handling migrants and their problems/ issues related to registration, ration cards and other relevant documents, education of their children, health and medical care, housing and sanitation, social security schemes, labour exploitation, job related grievances, etc.

## **1.2 Universe of the Study**

This study is limited to the two districts in Kerala - Trichur and Ernakulum . Factors influencing decision to migrate to Kerala and the supply chain of migrants are examined after collecting data from Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha , the five home states of migrant labourers in Kerala. For this purpose a total of 20 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were organized in 10 districts of the five States.

## **1.3 Sample Size**

The methodology adopted for the proposed study is primarily based on primary data. The data from the field is supplemented by secondary data. Primary data is collected through a sample survey in Kerala. The study covered 4 blocks and 3 Municipalities/ Municipal Corporations in 2 districts. These geographical areas are selected using purposive sampling method. A total of 10 districts of 5 five States- Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha- are covered for collecting relevant data through 20 Focus Group Discussions.

## **1.4 Respondents**

A total of 1000 people have participated in the sample survey in Kerala . The respondents included domestic migrant labourers from various Indian States, local labourers in Kerala, employers of domestic migrant labourers , officials of state Government, elected representatives and officials of local government institutions, NGOs and prominent citizens in Kerala.

# **2 Results of the Study**

## **2.1 Determinants of Migration of Labourers to Kerala**

The state of Kerala has a unique place by its development experience which is characterized by high social development without high level of economic growth. Kerala model of development is highlighted by several scholars and institution and the state is ranked first among the states in India on the basis of human development index. Kerala has the highest ranking in the case of most of the development indicators such as literacy rate, sex ratio , infant mortality rate and life expectancy at birth, This development pattern has attracted migrant labourers from various states to Kerala. Major determinants of migration of labourers to Kerala are compulsions from rural indebtedness, growing unemployment , poor income from agriculture in home state, pressure of large size of the family, catalytic role of recruitment agents, positive role of social network of migrants, high wage rate in Kerala and the preference of employers in Kerala for migrant laborers who are ready to work at low wage rate. The main reason behind migration is the employment considerations and the bleak employment prospect in the local labour

markets. The difference in the economic opportunities between home states and Kerala is pushing the movement of migrant labour.

## **2.2 Major States of Migrant Labourers in Kerala**

Major portion of migrant laborers come to Kerala from West Bengal (23%), Assam (18.25%), Bihar (16.5%), Uttar Pradesh (13.75%) and Odisha (7.5%). Apart from these states about 21 percent migrant laborers come from other states such as Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

## **2.3 Channels of Labour Migration**

Friends and relatives are the largest channels of labour migration while contractors and agents continue as the other strong channels.

## **2.4 Age Profile of Migrant Labourers**

Migrant laborers are male and about 74.25 percent are in the age group of 18-29 years. However, there are a few above the age of 36 years and under 18 years of age. Some of them come under the definition of child labourer while a few undergo school education in Kerala along with part- time work.

## **2.5 Religious Background**

Over 70 per cent DML belongs to Hindu religion against 22.5 percent Muslim and 6.75 per cent Christian religion. Most of the DML from UP, Bihar and Odisha belongs to Hindu religion while Muslim DML are mainly from Assam and West Bengal. A small size of Christian DML came from Assam and Odisha.

## **2.6 Socio-Economic background**

DML in Kerala are drawn from different social base. Majority of them belong to backward classes. Over 31 percent are Scheduled Castes against 26 percent OBC and 24.7 percent Scheduled Tribes. It is interesting to note that just 17.8 percent DML in Kerala belongs to the forward community .

## **2.7 Supply Chain of Migrants/Channels of Migration**

Many of the domestic migrant labourers are helped by their friends and relatives in finding jobs in Kerala. Agents (14.1%), contractors (27.3%), relatives (10.2%) and friends (40.59%) are the major channels of labour migrated to Kerala. There are variations in respect of channels of migration and state of origin. Agents play an important role in the Assam and West Bengal compared to other states. The role of contractor is significant in states of West Bengal and Bihar.

## **2.8 Occupational Pattern**

DML is seen across both rural and urban areas .While the migrants were working primarily in the construction sector as unskilled labour in the beginning stage, currently there is a change in the trend. The major chunk of migrant labourers is unskilled labourers. About 64 percent migrants are unskilled labourers while just 36 percent are skilled. The construction sector has the highest percentage of migrant

labourers (49.75%) followed by manufacturing (11.25%), hotel and restaurant (10%), trade (9%) and agriculture (3.25%).

## **2.9 Income and Expenditure Pattern**

DML get higher wage compared to the wage rate prevailing in the respective home state. About 29.25 percent migrant laborers get an average daily wage up to Rs.250 while 35.5 percent get Rs.251-Rs.400 and about 23 percent DML receive Rs 401- Rs. 500. The average monthly income of a skilled labourer is Rs. 30,250 and that of unskilled labourer is Rs. 22700. A large number of migrant labourers live without family and work overtime. The expenditure of both skilled and unskilled labourers is found to be quite low as most of them get free accommodation from the employer. The average monthly expenditure of a skilled labourer is Rs. 1520 while that of unskilled labourer is Rs. 1510.

## **2.10 Problems of Migrant Labourers in Kerala**

DML in Kerala are confronted with a wide range of problems. These include non- provisioning of entitlements of government schemes, poor access to available schemes and services, inadequate safeguards and high risk in construction sector, poor quality of accommodation, long working hours, limited access to health care services, social exclusion, poor social interaction and lack of integration with the local community,

**2.10.1 Exploitation by Agents:** The exploitation of middleman and agents has reduced the salary income of migrant labourers. A considerable number of migrant laborers, at the time of leaving the home state, enter into an agreement to work at a lower salary than the amount offered by the employer.

**2.10.2 Long Working Hours:** Working hours of migrant labourers is in the range of 8-14 hours and they work for 6 days in a week. They do not have much time for entertainment. Just a small section of migrant labourers gets relaxation and entertainment.

**2.10.3 High Risk in Construction and Manufacturing Sectors:** Inadequate safeguards and absence of insurance coverage are the common problems in the construction sector. About 50 migrant laborers in the construction sector meet with an accidental death in a month in Kerala. There is no proper reporting of death of migrant laborers due to the difficulties in identification and lack of identity documents.

**2.10.4 Unhealthy Living Conditions:** Health care of domestic migrant laborers is totally neglected as significant number lives in unhealthy conditions facing various health related risks. A large number of migrant labourers live in labour camps and housing clusters where environment cleanliness is not maintained. Most of the migrant workers, especially the construction workers, are accommodated in crowded rooms with minimum facilities like electricity, water and toilet. There is no mechanism to prevent

spread of diseases by these migrants. Unauthorized dumping of waste by the migrant workers create environmental hazardous. Healthcare services for migrant workers are limited causing the spread of the disease. Overtime work causes several health problems to migrant laborers.

**2.10.5 No Access to Rights and Entitlements:** Lack of access to rights and entitlements for migrant laborers is another serious problem. Both employers of migrant labourers and government institutions at state level or national level do not pay any attention in providing welfare measures to migrant labourers. Hence their entitlements are not availed by migrant labourers in Kerala. There is a lack of awareness about the existing legal and social security measures in Kerala. Migrant labourers do not have access to health services, welfare schemes and social security schemes. It is the non-provisioning of entitlements and non- portability of benefits provided by central and home state are what create problems for the migrants.

**2.10.6 Absence of Proper Accommodation and Poor Quality of Life :** Living conditions of the domestic migrant labourer in Kerala are miserable. DML stay together and work together on the basis of language. In both cases the quality of accommodation is quite poor though basic necessities such as electricity, water and common toilets are available.

**2.10.7 Social Exclusion:** Various factors are responsible for the social exclusion of migrant labourers in Kerala. Both local community and state government of Kerala have negative perception about domestic migrant labourers. The state government has initiated certain actions citing threat of security from the increasing inflow of citizens of Bangladesh through West Bengal. Local people consider DML as possible carriers of diseases that were eradicated from Kerala.

**2.10.8 Lack of Identity and Registration:** Migrant labourers do not have any documentation of identity proof or registration issued by any authorities in Kerala while most of them hold identity cards issued by their respective home state.

## **2.11 Factors Influencing the Acceptability of Migrant Laborers in Kerala**

The migrant labourers in Kerala do not take away the rights of local labourers or local community but help Kerala economically in filling the gap in demand and supply of labour. This understanding can reduce the tension in the local community. Kerala has not yet accepted the migrants as an integral part of the economy and most of the migrant labourers are looked down upon by the people in Kerala. Migrant labourers remain separated from the local community as there are several barriers to the integration of migrant labourers with the local community in Kerala. Language continues to be a major barrier as

migrant laborers cannot communicate in Malayalam language. While migrant laborers require integration with the local community, apprehensions of Keralites about the possibility of criminals among migrant labourers and illegal migration of labourers from Bangladesh through West Bengal are causing a major hindrance. By implementing certain measures indicated in the following section the acceptability of migrant labourers in Kerala can be improved.

### **3 Major Suggestions**

**3.1 Tracking and Registration of Migrant labourers in Kerala:** An inter coordination of various departments of Government of Kerala can lead to an effective system of tracking and registration of migrant labourers in Kerala. These are department of labour, department of home, department of health, department of social welfare. State, local government institutions, trade unions, community based organizations and voluntary organizations should be involved in tracking migrant labourers in Kerala. Along with the tracking of migrant labourers a system of registration needs to be started within a proper policy framework.

### **3.2 Access to Rights and Entitlements for Migrant labourers in Kerala**

Migrant labourers should be provided access to their rights and entitlements in Kerala. This requires a change in policy of both state government of Kerala and Government of India. A portability of benefits and entitlements, including food supplies, insurance, medical benefits etc., could be initiated. Government of India can take appropriate measures for the implementation of portability of entitlements to migrant laborers. Portability of entitlements at place of migration is the need of the hour. Migrant labourers should be able to get the benefits of public distribution system in Kerala.

### **3.3 Access to Basic Needs and Essential Services for Migrant Laborers**

Proper housing facilities, educational services and health care are now unavailable to migrant labourers in Kerala and hence there is an urgent need for introducing certain concrete measures. Government of Kerala with the support of Government of India can implement low cost special housing schemes for migrant labourers preferably through Public-Private partnerships. In a similar way, migrant labourers' hostels and night shelters may be constructed and managed by local government institutions. Special housing schemes including hostels and night shelters are quite essential for the floating migrant workers in Kerala. All the government hospitals ranging from primary health centre to district hospitals, should give a special care to migrant labourers. A special medical insurance scheme may be introduced for them.

In the wake of Right to Education (RTE) Act, child laborers below 14 years need schooling. We need to give lot of support services to these adolescent children including education, life-skill training and mental

health counseling. It is pertinent to promote measures for the education of the children within the framework of Right to Education Act

#### **4 Model of an Institutional Mechanism in Kerala**

##### **4.1 Local Government Institutions, Government of Kerala**

*Activities:* Tracking, registering of migrant labourers in Kerala and issuing of an identity card to all domestic migrant labourers are the major activities. Migrant Labourers have a tendency to move within the state and hence a centralized online system needs to be introduced using a software connecting all Panchayats and Municipalities.

*Expected Outcomes:* An online centralized registration system, supported by software, is introduced. A database is created and continuously updated.

##### **4.2 Trade Unions, Residence Welfare Associations, Association of Panchayats and Municipalities, service providers of mobile phones and Voluntary Organizations in Kerala .**

*Activities:* Provide support to Tracking and Registration of Migrant labourers in Kerala.

*Expected Outcomes:* Online Centralized Registration system supported by software is in place . A database is created and continuously updated.

##### **4.3 Department of Labour, Government of Kerala**

*Activities:* In addition to provide support to tracking and Registration of Migrant labourers in Kerala, the department should take follow - up actions in ensuring the welfare of migrant labourers.

*Expected Outcomes:* Labour welfare including minimum wages and reduction of vulnerability of migrant labourers

##### **4.4 Department of Home , Government of Kerala**

*Activities:* Tracking of illegal migrants and steps for prevention of crimes. Provide support to registration of migrant labourers in Kerala

*Expected Outcomes:* Reduction in crime and prevention of illegal migrant labourers

##### **4.5 Department of Health, Government of Kerala**

*Activities:* Provide support to tracking and registration of Migrant labourers in Kerala. With the cooperation of Panchayats and municipalities health camps may be organized once in six months. Health cards with all the identification details and health related information may be issued to all the migrant labourers

*Expected Outcomes:* Improvement of health care of migrant labourers in particular and public health care in general.

#### **4.6 Government of Kerala**

*Activities:* Prepare a draft bill in consultation with all the stakeholders. Pass the bill in the legislative assembly

*Expected Outcomes:* A legal framework is created to address all relevant problems of migrant laborers

#### **4.7 Role of Government of India and Home States in the Institutional Mechanism in Kerala**

##### **4.7.1 Ministry of Labor, Government of India**

*Activities:* Coordinate with other relevant Ministries of Government of India to provide access to Rights and entitlements for migrant labourers in Kerala. Coordinate with state governments of various home states to provide access to rights and entitlements for migrant labourers in Kerala/ other states. Financial support from the central government may be given for welfare of domestic migrant labourers in Kerala/other States.

*Expected Outcomes:* The portability of basic entitlements for migrant labourers is ensured. Financial support from the central government is made available for welfare of domestic migrant labourers in Kerala/other States.

##### **4.7.2 Each state Government of Origin of Migrant Labourers**

*Activities:* Provide relevant information and guidance to migrant labourers in Kerala with the help of, Panchayats and municipalities and voluntary organizations .This will enable them in addressing various problems in host states.

*Expected Outcomes:* A database on out-migrant from the respective state is created and updated. Continuous facilitations and support are provided to out- migrants.



## **Chapter: 1**

### **Introduction**

**1.1** One of the most striking features of the labour market in Kerala is the increasing presence of migrant labourers from various Indian states especially from eastern region. Kerala is the destination point for many migrant workers from economically backward regions of India. At the same time the state of Kerala continues to be the largest supplier of global migrant workers in the world. The domestic migrant labourers in Kerala need a special attention as these workers, single as well as families are increasingly engaged in skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled jobs. These migrant labourers are being recruited in the major infrastructural projects, in construction sector and traditional occupational categories like farming, masonry, carpentry, electrical, plumbing, hotel and domestic works.

Apart from Kerala some other developed states of India have also attracted migrant laborers from less developed states. There have been various studies on the migrant labourers in other states. Some of the studies have indicated that migrant labourers can influence political participation, democratic election and Governance. It is reported that BJP got political benefits in the parliament election 2014 from the migrants in Gujarat. The state of Gujarat gets migrants both from the Hindi heartland and eastern states like Assam, Odisha and West Bengal and many villagers of neighboring states of Gujarat reported that they are influenced by the experience sharing of migrant labourers from Gujarat. They heard experiences of good governance in Gujarat from migrant workers who had returned from Gujarat to nearby villages. These stories were sufficed to provide hope for disillusioned villagers who wanted to take a decision in electing their representatives. The stories of a few migrants carried credibility, and spread over large areas in poor and backward areas. This indicates that migrants can act as independent evaluators of governance. (Anklesariaaiyar, 2014).

A recent study on industrial migrants labourers in Punjab found that they saved a paltry amount which in turn resulted in improvement of their overall economic condition in the home state. In fact, this factor has encouraged them to work out of desperation despite discrimination and exploitation in the host state (Mehra and Singh 2014). A large number of industrial and business units have started employing these migrant workers to reduce cost of labour by paying less wages and benefits. Migrated laborers get high wages with better working conditions in Kerala compared to their home state. Even though Kerala has the largest number of educated unemployment, they are not ready to work as labourers.

The migrant labourers do not get benefits of public distribution system, health insurance schemes and other national and state welfare schemes. Moreover, social welfare and protection of migrant workers are

not given adequate attention by state government or local governments. The migrant labourers do not have benefits which they used to avail of in their home states. The benefits like subsidized food grain or health insurance schemes are not given to the workers as they do not have any residential proof and there are no properly implemented social security measures for the unorganized sector workers. Exploitation of workers is very rampant as the majority of the workers are illiterate and unaware of their rights.

The Migrant Labourers' Welfare Scheme, 2010" enacted by Government of Kerala provides many benefits to the migrant workers who are registered with the police. Also "The Minimum Wages Act, 1948" provides for the fixation and enforcement of minimum wages in India. It prevents the labour from exploitation through payment of low wages. But these laws are not implemented properly or sometimes the employers make shortcuts to bypass these laws. In spite of these measures the critical issues concerning the interstate migrants remain untouched. The scope for involving local governments is not yet examined. The awareness level of migrants about existing policies and available scheme and support system is abysmally low. The socio-economic and health issues of migrants are not studied in detail.

The migrant labourers are "viewed" as a "social hazard" by a group of people in Kerala. Some health experts believe that some of the interstate migrants are carriers of diseases hitherto unheard of in the state of Kerala. It is also argued that involvements of the interstate workers are one of the reasons for the recent spurt in crime rate in Kerala. There is a concern that the problem of child labour in the State can restart as these migrant workers sometimes moves along with their families. Above all, currently integration of interstate migrant workers with socially advanced society of Kerala does not take place. There is a need for a scientific study to examine various aspects of the complex issues of these migrant labourers. Government of Kerala do not have much clarity on various issues of migrant labourers and a supportive policy framework is totally missing. The results of the study will enable relevant government authorities to formulate and implement an action plan to address various socio-economic and health problems of in migrants. The finding of the proposed study can provide solutions to these issues. Policy makers can take concrete measures to address these issues using the output of the study.

## **1.2 Output and Objectives**

The major objectives of the study are to:

- examine the socio-economic characteristics of interstate migrants
- study the supply chain of migrants
- identify the factors influencing their decision to migrate to Kerala
- understand working and living conditions of interstate migrants in Kerala
- analyze various socio-economic, occupational and health issues of interstate migrants
- assess the social integration of migrants with the residents
- examine the role of Panchayats and Municipalities in addressing the problem of migrants.

- identify welfare and social security provisions for migrant workers.
- critically analyze need for special intervention for the upliftment and welfare of migrant workers through government programmes
- suggest measures for enhancing the welfare of interstate migrants in Kerala.

The output of the study is as the following:

1. Identification of factors influencing the labourers to migrate to Kerala
2. Identification of factors influencing the acceptability of these labourers in Kerala
3. Identification of region or regions / the state or states from which maximum migration is taking place
4. Suggestions on how to reduce the vulnerability of migrant workers
5. Recommendation of a model of an institutional mechanism for handling migrants and their problems/ issues related to registration, ration cards and other relevant documents, education of their children, health and medical care, housing and sanitation, social security schemes, labour exploitation, job related grievances, etc.

## **1.3 Methodology**

### **1.3.1 Research Design**

On the basis of readings of secondary sources and field experience, relevant research questions and issues pertinent to the study objectives were identified. A detailed methodology was prepared for the study. The methodology adopted for the proposed study is primarily based on primary data. The data from the field is supplemented by secondary data. Primary data is collected through a sample survey.

### **1.3.2 Sampling Design**

**1.3.1.1 Primary Data from Kerala:** As per the objectives and research design, districts and blocks were selected using purposive sampling method. Trichur and Ernakulam districts were selected as these two districts have the largest concentration of migrant laborers. Out of these two districts, two blocks were selected using certain criteria. The broad criteria for selection of these four sample blocks are as follows:

- Covering migrants from different fields of work
- Covering migrants different geographical areas
- Covering regions where the concentration of migrants is higher

In addition one Municipal Corporation in Trichur district and two municipalities in Ernakulam district are studied in order to understand the urban dimension of migrants ( See Table: 1.1)

**Table 1.1**

**Selection of Districts in Kerala and Respondents for Field Study**

	<b>Sample selection</b>	<b>Name of Districts/ Blocks/ Municipalities/Municipal Corporation</b>	<b>Criteria for the selection of districts/ blocks/municipalities</b>
Districts	2	Trichur and Ernakulum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covered highest concentration of migrant labourers</li> </ul>
Blocks	4	Muvattupuzha (Ernakulum) Paravur(Ernakulum) Kovappadi(Ernakulum) Vypeen(Ernakulum)  Chavakkadu (Trichur) Cherpu(Trichur) Vengallore(Trichur) Mala(Trichur)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covered highest concentration of labourer</li> <li>• Covered developed and undeveloped areas.</li> <li>• Covered known cluster of migrant labourers</li> </ul>
Municipalities	2	Perumbavoor Municipality Kalamassery municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covered known cluster of migrant labourers</li> </ul>
Municipal Corporation	1	Trichur Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covered known cluster of migrant labourers</li> </ul>

From these geographical locations a total of 1000 respondents were covered under interviews and meetings. As is shown in Table 1.2 the respondents include 300 migrant labourers from blocks, 100 from municipalities , 150 local labourers from blocks 50 from municipalities . In addition, 300respondents from blocks, 100 from municipalities under the category of employer, officials of state Government representatives, elected representatives and official of local government institutions of NGOs/ Prominent citizens were also covered . The respondent under this category included district labour officers,

members and chairperson of standing committee on Health at local government institutions health official of both state and local government institutions. Each respondent was interviewed and the data was recorded systematically. All the information collected from the field survey was collated in to a statistical format. The tabulation itself was fairly simple, straightforward and easily comprehensible. The variables used were meaningfully co-related. Appropriate statistical methods were used for estimating various qualitative and quantitative attributes.

**Table 1.2**

**Field Survey in Kerala: Distribution of Respondents**

SI No.	Categories	District wise distribution	Blocks and Municipalities	Total (Nos)
1	Domestic Migrant labourers from various Indian States	2x200	300(blocks) 100( Municipalities )	400
2	Local labourers in Kerala	2x100	150(blocks) 50( Municipalities )	200
3	Employers	2x50	80 (blocks) 20 (Municipalities)	100
4	Officials of state Government representatives, elected representatives and official of local government institutions of NGOs/ Prominent citizens	2x200	220(blocks) 80( Municipalities )	300
	<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>750 (blocks) 250 (Municipalities)</b>	<b>1000</b>

**1.3.2.1.1 Major Variables for Data Collection and Schedule:** Four types of structured questionnaires/schedules were used to collect primary data. The details are given below:

**Questionnaire/Schedule – 1: Domestic Migrant Labourers in Kerala**

Major variables collected through the Schedule 1 are as follows:

- Factors influencing the labourers to migrate to Kerala and socio economic background of labourers
- Supply channel, through contractors, friends, etc
- Sector of employment, Employers name and size and nature of operations
- Period of work in Kerala
- Wage rate
- Household income
- Household expenditure
- Work nature (skilled or unskilled)
- Working overtime, payment pattern,
- Provisions for leave
- Food habits, health habits
- Housing/Accommodation
- Occupational Problems
- Health status, Illness, different types of medical care provided
- Registration with relevant departments/institutions/ local government
- Details of Identity card issued
- Cultural dimensions
- Problems of migrant labourers

## **Questionnaire/Schedule – 2: Employer of Domestic Migrant Labourers in Kerala**

Schedule -2 sought the following particulars

- Reasons for employing migrant labourers instead of local labourers
- Supply channel, through contractors, friends, etc
- Type of migrant labourers (skilled or unskilled, etc.) employed
- Wage rate
- Specific Issues faced by migrant workers compared to the local workers
- Health related issues due to the migration
- Problems faced by society out of migration
- Crime rate due to the migration
- Welfare Schemes available to migrants
- Suggestions for improving the socio-economic and health status of migrants

**Questionnaire/Schedule –3: State Officials/ Elected Representatives and officials of Panchayat/ Municipality/Corporation in Kerala**

Schedule -3 sought the following particulars:

- Wage rate of migrant labourer and local labourer
- Specific Issues faced by migrant workers compared to the local workers
- Health related issues due to the migration
- Problems faced by society out of migration
- Crime rate due to the migration
- Welfare Schemes available to migrants
- Suggestions for improving the socio-economic and health status of migrants

**Questionnaire/Schedule –4: Local Labourers in Kerala**

Schedule -4 sought the following particulars:

- Sector of employment , Employers name and size and nature of operations
- Wage rate
- Household income
- Household expenditure
- Work nature (skilled or unskilled):
- Working overtime, payment pattern
- Provisions for leave
- relationship/issues with migrant workers
- problems from migrant labourers including language /communication/cultural problems
- Welfare schemes and social security schemes such as pension, health insurance, etc

Schedule 1 to 4 are given in Annexure:1, Annexure:2, Annexure:3 and Annexure:4 respectively.

**1.3.2.1.2 Primary Data Collection through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in Kerala**

Data was collected from a total of six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in Trichur and Ernakulam districts in Kerala. A separate check list was used to conduct FGDs. Data was collected from a total of six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in Trichur and Ernakulam districts. A total of 152 persons participated in the FGDs in Kerala (See Table 1.4).

**Table 1.3**  
**Interview and Meetings in Home States and Kerala**

State	Interviews/ Meetings (Nos)	Participants	Purpose
West Bengal (Districts: Jalpaiguri and Murshidabad )	15	Members of Gram Sabha, elected representatives and officials of Panchayats,	Validation of the feedback received from DML Kerala
Assam (Districts: Bongaigoan and Kokrajhar )	12	Members of Gram Sabha, elected representatives and officials of Panchayats	Validation of the feedback received from DML Kerala
Bihar (Districts: Nalanda Muzzafarpur )	14	Members of Gram Sabha, elected representatives and officials of Panchayats	Validation of the feedback received from DML Kerala
UP (Districts: Pratapgarh Muzaffarnagar)	11	Members of Gram Sabha, elected representatives and officials of Panchayats in Kerala	Validation of the feedback received from DML Kerala
<b>Odisha</b> (Districts: Koraput Kalahandi)	15	Members of Gram Sabha, elected representatives and officials of Panchayats	Validation of the feedback received from DML Kerala



Kerala (Districts: Trichur and Ernakulam)	155	Members of Gram Sabha, elected representatives and officials of Panchayats	Discuss socio-economic, occupational and health issues of DML the role of Panchayats and Municipalities in addressing the problems measures for enhancing their welfare and a model of an institutional mechanism for handling DML and their problems
<b>Total home states: 5</b> <b>Total districts: 10</b> <b>Host state: 1</b> <b>Total districts in Host state: 2</b>	222		

### 1.3.2.2 Primary Data collection through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in 5 Home States

Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa, the five home states of migrant labourers in Kerala were covered under the study. Data was collected from a total of 20 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in the 10 districts in 5 States. These States are Assam (48), Bihar (44), Orissa (46), Uttar Pradesh (48) and West Bengal (56). A separate check list was used to conduct FGDs. As shown in Table 1.4, a total of 242 persons participated in the Focus Group Discussions held in home states. The major objective of the FGD was to identify the factors influencing their decision to migrate to Kerala and to understand the supply chain of migrants.

**Table 1.4**  
**Focus Groups Discussions in Home States and Kerala**

State	Date of FGD	Place of FGD	Participants	Remarks
West Bengal	4-4-14	Jalpaiguri Zilla Parishad	15	Ordinary citizens, Prominent citizens, family members of migrant labourers
West Bengal	5-4-14	Jalpaiguri Sadar BDO /PS office	13	
West Bengal	6-4-14	Murshidabad Zilla Parishad	14	
West Bengal	7-4-14	Murshidabad BDO /PS office	14	
Assam	6-5-14	Kokrajhar Town, near Secretariat BTC	12	
Assam	7-5-14	VCDC, Kokrajhar	12	
Assam	8-5-14	Near Bongaigoan District Head Quarters	13	
Assam	9-5-14	Bongaigoan Zilla Parishad	11	
Bihar	16-5-14	Nalanda Town	10	
Bihar	17-5-14	Nalanda Rajgeer	12	
Bihar	19-5-14	Muzzafarpur Town	11	
Bihar	20-5-14	Saraiya in Muzaffarpur	11	
Uttar Pradesh	20-5-14	Pratapgarh Zilla Parishad	13	

Uttar Pradesh	20-5-14	Pratapgarh Kshettra Panchayat	12	
Uttar Pradesh	12-4-14	Muzaffarnagar Zilla Parishad	12	
Uttar Pradesh	13-4-14	Muzaffarnagar Kshettra Panchayat	11	
Odisha	14-4-14	Koraput District Head Quarter	11	
Odisha	15-4-14	Koraput Block Office	11	
Odisha	16-4-14	Kalahandi District Head Quarter	13	
Odisha	17-4-14	Kalahandi Block Office	11	
<b>Home States Total</b>			<b>242</b>	
Kerala	2-3-14	Perumbavoor Municipality	10	
Kerala	3-3-14	Kalamassery municipality	10	
Kerala	3-3-14	Chavakkadu (Trichur)	10	
Kerala	3-3-14	Cherpu(Trichur)	10	
Kerala	5-3-14	Mala(Trichur)	11	

Kerala	6-3-14	Vengallore(Trichur)	12	
Kerala	5-3-14	Municipal Corporation (Trichur)	12	
Kerala	7-3-14	Muvattupuzha (Ernakulum)	11	
Kerala	7-3-14	Vypeen(Ernakulum)	12	
Kerala	8-3-14	Kakkanad (Ernakulum)	12	
Kerala	15-3-14	Paravur(Ernakulum)	10	
Kerala	27-3-14	Kovappadi(Ernakulum)	12	
Kerala	28-3-14	Alwaye UC College (Ernakulum)	10	
Kerala	30-3-14	Cochin Corporation Office (Ernakulum)	10	
<b>Total Kerala</b>			<b>152</b>	
<b>Grant Total</b>			<b>394</b>	

### **1.3.2.3 Data Collection through Discussions in Electronic Forums at National Level**

Data was collected from virtual discussions using electronic platforms. Queries on the major objectives of the present study were posted in the two electronic forums. One of these forums is managed by UNDP India under the name “Solution Exchange” (<http://www.in.undp.org/content/india/en/home/knowledge-and-solutions/solution-exchange>). The second one is sponsored by Centre for Rural Management, Kottayam, Kerala under the name “Dec Watch” (<https://groups.google.com/d/msg/decwatch>). A total of 27 persons participated in these two discussion forums. These include officials of various government institutions, scholars, researchers and practitioners, academicians and representatives of NGOs and Civil Society Organizations.

**1.3.3. Secondary Data:** Various types of secondary data including studies, reports and data prepared by government and non-governmental organizations were used for the study. Findings of various other relevant studies in other States were reviewed. These included books, articles, periodicals and websites of relevant institutions. This has provided more insights into the critical issues and possible remedies.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Factors and Determinants of Migration to Kerala**

The state of Kerala has certain distinctive features in respect of various social and economic indicators. Numerous studies and reports have highlighted several of these features. “Kerala is known for certain social, political and economic reforms which enabled the state to ensure a modicum of social and economic security to the poor and marginalized people in society. Its unique problems include high unemployment, increasing morbidity and declining quality of education. Kerala’s economy has been growing at a rate on par with, or higher than, the all-India average since 1987-88. Remittances from overseas Malayalees contribute about 22% of the state’s income. This has fuelled consumption, triggering the growth of the tertiary sector. The state’s governance model, driven by public investment in social sectors like education and health, and welfare schemes including a strong public distribution system, could fuel sustained economic growth” (Kurian and John 2009). “Kerala stands unique among Indian States with a consistently higher level of human development comparable with that of many advanced countries but with a much lower per capita income. Kerala ranked first among major States in India in the Human Development Index (HDI) at the three time points of 1981, 1991 and 2001, but its per capita income lagged behind the all-India average till recently”(Government of Kerala 2006). As is evident from Table 2.1 the state of Kerala has made significant achievements in respect of various development indicators compared to several Indian states. The state of Kerala has a unique place by its development experience which is characterized by high social development without high level of economic growth. Kerala model of development is highlighted by several scholars and institutions. As is shown in Table 2.1 the state is ranked first among the states in India on the basis of human development index. In the case of most of the development indicators such as literacy rate, sex ratio , infant mortality rate and life expectancy at birth, Kerala has the highest ranking. This development pattern has attracted migrant labourers from various states to Kerala. Different studies and official committee reports on unorganized labour in India indicate that between 30 million to 100 million people migrate within the country.

**Table 2.1**  
**Selected Indicators of Kerala and States of origin**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Kerala</b>	<b>West Bengal</b>	<b>Orissa</b>	<b>Bihar</b>	<b>Assam</b>
Population	33,406,061	91,276,115	41,974,218	104,099,452	31,205,576
HDI- Rank among states in India (2011)	1	9	19	18	12
Literacy rate (%)	94.00	76.26	72.87	61.80	72.19
Sex Ratio (2011) (females per 1000 males)	1084	950	979	918	958
Infant Mortality rate (2011)	12	32	57	44	55
Life expectancy at birth (2011-12)	74	64.9	59.6	616	58.9
Per capita Income at current price to 2011-12 (Rs)	83725	55864	46150	24681	33633
% of rural households with access to no toilets	6.8	53.3	85.9	82.4	40.4
% of urban households with	2.6	15.0	35.2	31.0	6.3

access to no toilets					
Rural Poverty ratio monthly per capita income 2011-12	1018	783	695	778	828
Urban Poverty ratio monthly per capita income 2011-12	987	981	861	923	1008

Source: [www.census2011.co.in/states.php](http://www.census2011.co.in/states.php)

[http://www.in.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/inequality\\_adjusted\\_human\\_development\\_index\\_for\\_india\\_s\\_state1.pdf](http://www.in.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/inequality_adjusted_human_development_index_for_india_s_state1.pdf)

Sample Registration System, Office of the Registrar General, India, Ministry of Home Affairs

[indiabudget.nic.in](http://indiabudget.nic.in)

[www.Planningcommission.nic.in](http://www.Planningcommission.nic.in)

<http://pbplanning.gov.in/pdf/Statewise%20GSDP%20PCI%20and%20G.R.pdf>

## 2.1 Shortage of Manual Laborers in Kerala

The labour community in Kerala works in informal sector, traditional industries, manufacturing sector, IT industry, units in export promotion zones. The labourers in informal sector are mainly engaged in loading and unloading, casual work, construction work, brick making and self-employment. Migrant laborers are mainly demanded in informal sector and manufacturing sector. Kerala has attracted the migrant laborers from various Indian States and it has been witnessing fast growth in the inflow of domestic migrant labourers in the last couple of years. Kerala has attracted more than 25 lakh migrant workers who are employed in various sectors in the state (Government of Kerala 2013). According to Government of Kerala, 47 per cent of migrant labourers are from West Bengal and 16 per cent are from Orissa. These domestic migrant labourers are engaged in different areas including agriculture, construction, hotel and restaurant, manufacturing and trade. In some instance these workers exceeds the number of domestic workers employed. According to the estimate made by GIFT about 25 lacs domestic migrant labourers have been working in Kerala and every year about 2.35 lacs DML are being added (Narayana, Venkiteswaran and Joseph 2013)<sup>1</sup>. Most of the sectors of Kerala need DML as the labours from Kerala are in severe shortage. Now they are called “Kerala’s own outsiders”. In Kerala, the youths in the middle class as well as income groups are getting employed in the IT sector or in the gulf

<sup>1</sup> The study is carried out by Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation, an autonomous institution of Government of Kerala. The study is sponsored by Government of Kerala in 2013. The estimations and findings of the study are quoted in various documents of Government of Kerala.



countries resulting in to a drastic change in the nature of labour market in Kerala .Now Keralites even in the lowest strata are reluctant to do manual labour and prefer to get white collar job. High educational background of the Malayalees persuades them to take up white collar jobs in profession, such as, banking, engineering, and management etc. The vacuum created by scarcity of local skilled workers makes room for other state workers. The IT boom in Kerala and in the neighboring states has paved the way to increase the income of middle class families including lower middle class which has resulted in the demand for manual labour. This has resulted in the shortage of manual laborers and the increase of wages to the range of Rs.500- 800 for unskilled and Rs.1000- Rs.1200 for skilled labour. High wage rate and more employment opportunities were the factors that pulled the migrants to Kerala (Surabhi and Kumar 2007). The labour market of Kerala has been witnessing an enhanced presence of migrant workers from eastern and northern states of India. Kerala, being the largest supplier of global migrant workers in the world, is seen as the destination point for many migrant workers from economically poorer regions. Recently several scholars have found that the shortage of skilled labour caused high wage rate. For instance, according to a study, the high wage cost in the plantation sector in Kerala is associated with a shortage of skilled labour. “In order to reduce costs of production and become competitive, it is necessary to bring down the existing wage rate. It is not easy to substitute or increase labour supply from outside because of the skill-specific nature of the job, which thus results in rigid wages and high costs of production”(Sumalatha and Nirmal Roy, 2010). It is a fact that both skilled and unskilled laborers are in great demand in the State of Kerala.

## **2.2 Pull and Push Factors**

Various studies have identified the major determinants of migration under two broad categories ie. Push and pull factors in the labour market. A recent study on migrants labourers working in industries of Ludhiana indicated that a majority of these labourers belonged to age group of 18-28 years who migrated from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to get away from unemployment and poverty (Mehra and Singh 2014). The availability of employment opportunity in Kerala to improve one's quality of life exerts a “pull” on the migrants from different parts of the country. Kerala has the highest Human Development Index in India and there is growing demand for laborers. Simultaneously, the undesirable social or economic situation in the home state plays as a “push” factor for the members of the community to migrate to other states.

### **2.2.1 Push and Pull Factor: State Specific Analysis**

#### **2.2.1.1 Perception of Local Community: Focus Groups Discussions**

Representatives of local community in the home states of domestic migrant labourers in Kerala who participated in FGD in states of West Bengal, Assam, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are quite positive about Kerala as an attractive destination for migrant laborers. In fact, their relatives and acquaintances working in Kerala have motivated local community to send more people to Kerala for work. All the

participants in FGDs have cited unemployment and absence of livelihood opportunities in the villages of home states as the major factors for the community to send their members as domestic migrant labourers in Kerala.

#### **2.2.1.2 Assam**

Considerable size of labourers from Assam has been working in Kerala as migrant labourers. “In the case of Assamese workers, the first batches came to Kerala in the late 80’s and early 90’s in the aftermath of a legal ban on wood felling and the consequent closure of wood/plywood industries in their state. It was also a time when wood industrial units were being set up in Perumbavur; they came in groups to work here, and were much preferred due to their experience and expertise in it. Later, when the construction boom started in the mid-90’s many of them moved to construction, where the wages were much higher” (Narayana, Venkiteswaran and Joseph ,2013). Based on the feedback received from the migrant labourers and their relatives, friends and community members in Assam we have identified the factors that responsible for the migration of labourers from Assam to Kerala: Low levels of wages, unemployment and the increasing unemployment in agricultural sector have prompted most of Assam people to seek employment in Kerala. Inadequate irrigation facilities, low level of farm mechanization and uncertainty in agriculture income have compelled agricultural labourers and marginal farmers to migrate to Kerala. Poverty and rural indebtedness are cited as another important reason. Rural indebtedness is mainly due to ancestral loans or lack of awareness about better and cheaper source of labour. In many cases they had taken loan from money lenders. There is a psychological apathy of youths towards self-employment venture, especially in the context of frequent riots and conflicts. Low wage rate and absence of regular work in Assam are other factor responsible for the migration of labour to Kerala. Presences of nearby international border have caused inflow of a large number of illegal migrants reducing the employment opportunities. Prevailing insurgency scenario, frequent ethnic riots and communal conflicts have compelled many youths to go to Kerala as a migrant labourer.

#### **2.2.1.3 Bihar**

The present study has identified certain factors that are responsible for the migration of labourers from Bihar to Kerala. Large size of family which ranges from 7 to 12 members has compelled members to leave state for better employment opportunities and income generation activities. Some of them had migrated to Kerala for the repayment of the loan taken from money lenders due to rural indebtedness and poor income from agriculture. Uncertainty in agriculture income was an important factor that compelled marginal farmers to move to Kerala .Growing unemployment in Bihar has put pressure on youths to go to Kerala as migrant labourer. Low wages in the place of origin compared to Kerala have encouraged them to move out as a migrant labourer.

#### **2.2.1.4 Odisha**

Acute poverty in all the tribal districts is cited as the major reason for the migration of labourers from Odisha to Kerala. Rural indebtedness, mainly due to ancestral loans and income expenditure gap, is another factor. Even now the level of awareness about better and cheaper source of loan is quite low. Low and uncertain agriculture income is yet another factor. As indicated in Box 2.1, frequent crop failures and loans have pressurized several labourers to migrate to Kerala. Low wages and growing unemployment in Odisha are reported as two major reasons for the migration of laborers to Kerala.

#### **Box 2.1**

##### **Case study of Migrant Labourer from Odisha**

A family consisting of husband, wife, three children aged ten, five and aged father and mother had two acres of land where they used to cultivate crops. In 2010, due to sudden drought, their crops failed and they incurred a heavy loss. Also aged father was hospitalized in the same year. The family had to mortgage his land to a landlord in his village in Odisha for taking a loan of Rs. 1 lakh to meet their day-to-day living and the medical expense of their aged father. When the loan amount exhausted the family was forced to take an advance amount of Rs. 10,000 from a labour contractor against an agreement to work as a laborer in Kerala. Since then the laborer had been working in Kerala. Subsequently, the family has successfully released their mortgaged land and has even purchased 0.5 acres of land in Odisha where they are cultivating paddy.

*Source: Focus Group Discussion in Odisha*

#### **2.2.1.5 Uttar Pradesh**

Growing unemployment in UP is an important factor responsible for the migration of labourers from Uttar Pradesh to Kerala. Rural indebtedness, low agriculture income, drought and flood have compelled marginal farmers to migrate to Kerala. Large size of family and attractive wages in Kerala are other important factors responsible for migrating to Kerala.

#### **2.2.1.6 West Bengal**

The main purpose of migration of labourers in West Bengal to Kerala was to sustain their livelihood. Majority of the migrants are from border and hilly districts of West Bengal. In hilly district of Northern Bengal landless farmers, agricultural labourers and marginal farmers lost their livelihood due to various reasons including changes in agricultural practices related to globalization. Closure or abandonment of

tea plantation in Northern Bengal was a major factor for migration of labour to Kerala. Several owners of the tea plantation in West Bengal pledged the plantation land as collateral security to raise funds for investment from public financial institutions. Instead of investing this fund in plantation, these tea plantation companies diverted the capital to other sectors such as IT, construction, capital market, etc. This led to the downfall of tea plantations in North Bengal and a large number of labourers became jobless. These labourers had to live in poverty and subsequently many of them migrated to other states, particularly to Kerala. Natural calamities and problems in agriculture sector have compelled labourers to migrate to Kerala. Districts like Jalpiguri suffer from natural calamities every year resulting in frequent crop failure. A few districts are close to international border and the presence of illegal migrations along with high population growth rate. The agitation in the neighboring districts along ethnic lines is posing a major threat to peace and tranquility.

**2.2.2 Contractors, Recruitment Agents and Social Network As Catalyst:** Recruitment agents operate in the poverty-stricken area play as a catalyst in the migration of labourers to Kerala. They have used several promotional strategies such as advance payment of money, facilitation of migration process, free travel to Kerala, free accommodation in Kerala, etc. In many cases the money is paid to the family of the migrant much before they depart their homes. Their cost of travel and other incidental expenses are also being met by the agents. Once they arrive in Kerala they are being allocated to the construction site or workplace. In most of the cases, they share accommodation with several inmates in small rooms with limited facilities.

### **2.2.3 Attitude of Employers in Kerala**

Employers in Kerala prefer cheaper labour migrant workers from North and East India as they are ready to work in poor working and living conditions. Wage rate for DML is slightly lower than rate in the local labour market. They demand wages much lower than local labourers. The migrant workers are more punctual, dedicated and hard-working as they also do not leave for home state frequently.

### **2.2.4 Social Network**

The social network of Domestic Migrant Labourers is an important factor which enhances further migration to Kerala. Various studies indicate that social network of migrants induce further migration from other states. While migration appears as voluntary, an elaborate social network of migrants, mainly friends and relatives, facilitate and promote the migration process. India has been witnessing a trend of high mobility of people from one state to another for better livelihood especially they move from

economically weaker states to developed states. In the process, social network of domestic migrant labourers is a key factor.

**Table 2.2**  
**Push and Pull Factors of Migration to Kerala: Responses of DML**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>%</b>
Growing unemployment, lack of livelihood opportunities in home state	320	80
Rural indebtedness in home state	300	75
High wage rate in Kerala	288	72
Preference of employers in Kerala for migrant laborers.	272	68
Positive role of social network of migrants	208	52
Pressure of large size of the family	196	49
Poor income from agriculture	188	47
Recruitment agents as Catalyst	176	44

*Source: Field Survey in Kerala*  
*Multiple Response Questions*

The forgoing analysis clearly shows that the main reason behind migration is the employment considerations. The regions or districts of marginal labourers are characterized by inadequate avenues for livelihood and uncertain livelihood opportunities. There is a mismatch between the demand and supply of labourers in the labour market in their respective these home states. The bleak employment prospect in the local labour markets is perhaps the most important determinant of migration of labours to Kerala. Lack of opportunities in the native villages had pushed them out of their villages. The difference in the economic opportunities between home states and Kerala is pushing the movement of labour. As is evident from Table 2.2, both push and pull factors have played significant roles in determining the migration of laborers from different states to Kerala. Major push and pull factors of migration of labourers to Kerala are compulsions from rural indebtedness, growing unemployment, poor income from agriculture in home state, pressure of large size of the family, catalytic role of recruitment agents, positive role of social network of migrants, high wage rate in Kerala and the preference of employers in Kerala for migrant laborers who are ready to work at low wage rate.

## Chapter: 3

### Channels of Labour Migration and Profile of Migrants

#### 3.1 Supply Chain of Migrants/Channels of Migration

Let us discuss the supply chain of migrants. Many of the migrant laborers are helped by their friends and relatives in finding jobs in Kerala. Information about the work and the demand for laborers are obtained from the friends and relatives from the same region, who often act as a network in many cases. When employers tell a migrant worker about the requirement for a certain number of workers, the latter arranges the required number from those who have migrated from his birth place. Friends and relatives are instrumental in channelizing a large number of labourers from distant parts of India to Kerala. The results of our field survey report that agents (15.5%), contractors (24.25%), relatives (10%) and friends (40.25%) are the major channels of labour migrated to Kerala under the present study. It is found that friend is the single largest channel followed by contractors, agents and relatives

**Table 3.1**

#### Channels of Migration to Kerala: Aggregate Level

Channels of Migration	Numbers of responses	%
Agents	62	15.50
Contractors	97	24.25
Relatives	40	10
Friends	161	40.25
Others	40	10
Total	400	100

*Source: Field Survey*

The State wise analysis of channels of migration labourers to Kerala are reported in Table 3.2 and Fig 3.1. There are variations in respect of channels of migration and state of origin. Agents play an important role in the Assam (28.77%) and West Bengal (18.48%) compared to other states while the role of contractor is significant in states of West Bengal (30.43%) and Bihar (33.33%).

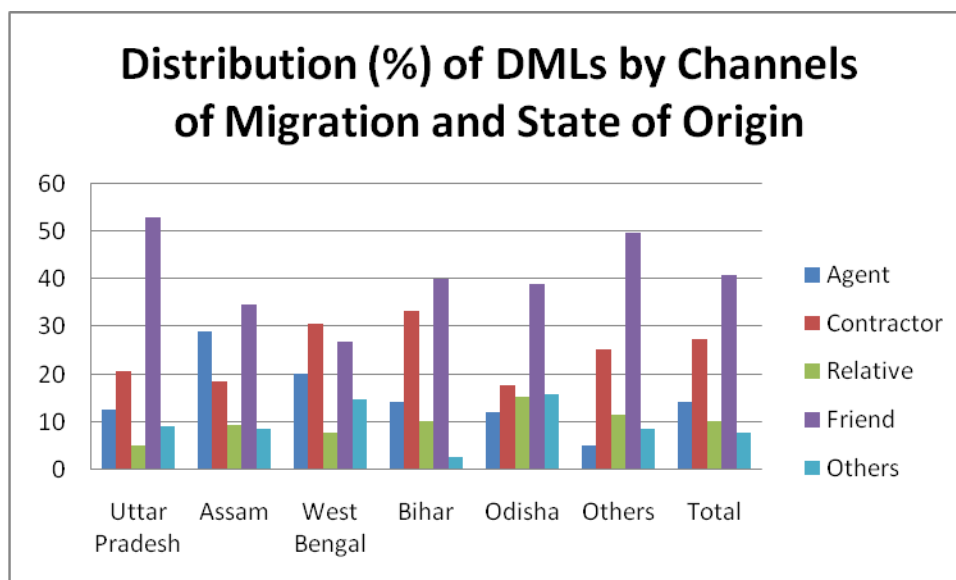
**Table 3.2**  
**Channels of Migration to Kerala: State wise Analysis**

State	Agent s (Num ber of respo nses)	Agen ts %	Cont racto rs (Nu mber of resp onse s)	Cont racto rs%	Relat ives (Nu mber of resp onse s)	Relati ves%	Frie nds (Nu mbe r of res pon ses)	Friend s %	Others (Numb er of respon ses)	Other s%	Total
Uttar Pradesh	7	12.73	11	20.00	3	5.45	29	52.73	5	9.09	55 (100)
Assam	21	28.77	14	19.18	7	9.59	25	34.25	6	8.22	73 (100)
West Bengal	17	18.48	28	30.43	7	7.61	26	28.26	14	15.22	92 (100)
Bihar	9	13.64	22	33.33	7	10.61	26	39.39	2	3.03	66 (100)
Odisha	4	13.33	5	16.67	4	13.33	12	40.00	5	16.67	30 (100)
Others	4	4.76	21	25.00	10	11.9	42	50.00	7	8.33	84 (100)

*Source: Field Survey*

*Note: Percentages are given in the bracket*

Fig : 3.1



### 3.2 States of Migration and Profile of Migrants

The results of field survey show that the major portion of migrant laborers came from West Bengal (23%), Assam (18.25), Bihar (16.5%), Uttar Pradesh (13.75%) and Odisha (7.5%). In addition, about 21 percent migrant laborers came from other States such as Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand (Table 3.3 and Figure 3.2).

Table 3.3

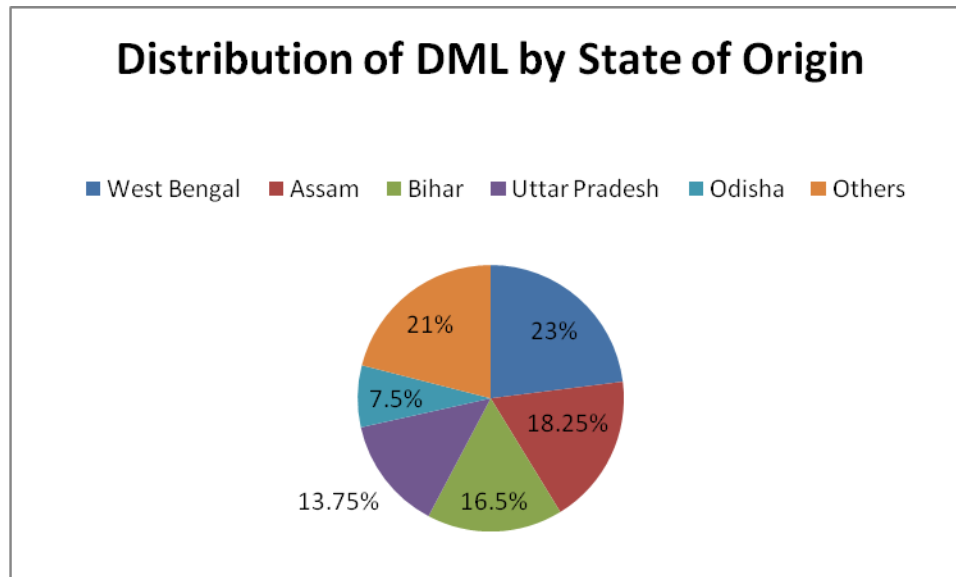
#### Distribution of DML by State of Origin

State of origin	Number of Responses	%
West Bengal	92	23
Assam	73	18.25
Bihar	66	16.5
Uttar Pradesh	55	13.75
Odisha	30	7.5
Others	84	21
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey



Fig: 3.2



By and large, migrant laborers in Kerala are male and about 90 percent of them are in the age group of 18-35 years. However, about 2.25 percent are under 18 years of age. Some of them come under the definitions of child labourer. However, some of them undergo school education in Kerala along with part-time work.

Table 3.4

**Age wise Distribution of DML in Kerala**

Age	Number of Responses	%
Below 18 years	9	2.25
18-23	162	40.5
24-29	135	33.75
30-35	64	16
36 and above	30	7.5
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey

The age wise distribution of DML in Kerala by State of origin is presented in Table 3.5. Difference in the age distribution of migrant labour across the states of origin is insignificant. However, it is found that the largest number of youth in the age group of 18-23 years (47.83%) came from West Bengal.

Table 3.5

## Age wise Distribution of DML in Kerala by State of Origin

State	Below 18 years (Number of Responses)	Below 18 (%)	18-23 years (Number of Responses)	18-23 years (%)	24-29 years (Number of Responses)	24-29 years (%)	30-35 years (Number of Responses)	30-35 years (%)	36 years and Above (Number of Responses)	36 years and Above (%)	Total
UP	1	1.82 (00)	22	40.00 (38.53)	22	40 (38.53)	6	10.91 (15.60)	4	7.27 (7.34)	55
Assam	2	2.74 (1.57)	36	49.32 (50.38)	26	35.62 (34.65)	8	10.96 (10.24)	1	1.37 (2.36)	73
West Bengal	2	2.17 (1.36)	44	47.83 (46.26)	26	28.26 (29.25)	14	15.22 (14.97)	6	6.52 (7.48)	92
Bihar	1	1.52 (0.75)	22	33.33 (34.59)	21	31.82 (33.08)	15	22.73 (21.05)	7	10.61 (9.03)	66
Odisha	1	3.33 (2.04)	11	36.67 (34.69)	8	26.67 (30.61)	6	20.00 (20.41)	4	13.33 (10.20)	30
Others	2	2.38 (1.18)	32	38.10 (37.65)	31	36.90 (37.65)	13	15.48 (14.71)	6	7.14 (8.82)	84

Sources (i) Field study(ii) Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation, "Domestic Migrant Labour in Kerala" Thiruvananthapuram 2013

Note: Figures in the bracket are the data reported in the study of Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation, "Domestic Migrant Labour in Kerala" Thiruvananthapuram 2013. Others include Indian States of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat and Maharashtra, and Nepal

All major religions are represented in the population of migrant labourers in Kerala . By and large, the representation is in proportion to the prevailing population pattern of the respective home state. About 70 percent respondents belong to Hindu religion followed by 22.6 per cent Muslim and 6.61 percent Christians (See Table 3.6 and Fig 3.3).

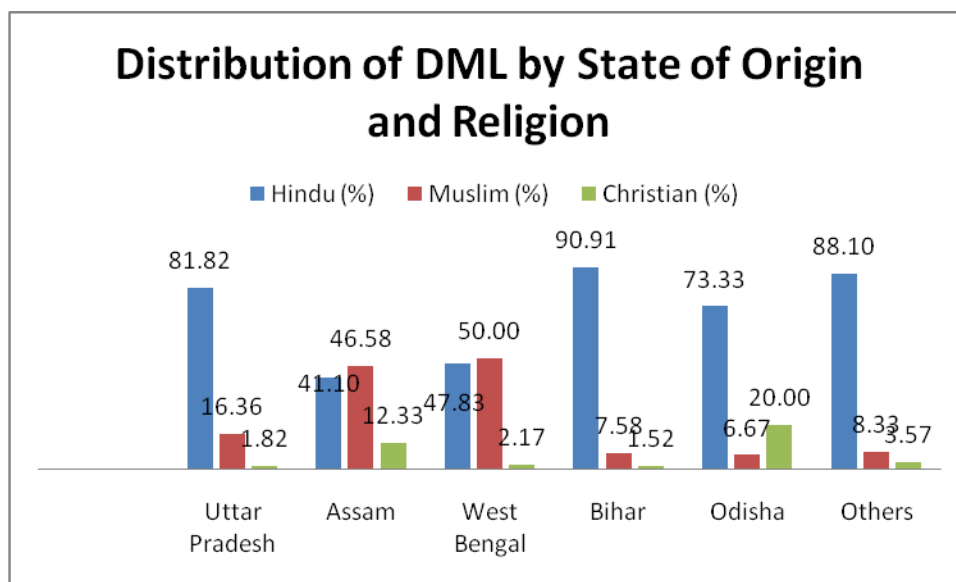
**Table 3.6**

**Religion: Distribution of DML in Kerala**

Religion	Number of Responses	%
Hindu	283	70.79
Muslim	90	22.5
Christian	27	6.75
Total	400	100

*Source: Field Survey*

**Fig: 3.3**



As is evident from Table 3.7 most of DML from UP (81.82%), Bihar (90.91%) and Odisha (73.33%) belong to Hindu religion while, Muslims DML are mainly from Assam (46.58%) and West Bengal (50%). A small size of Christian DML came from Assam (12.33%) and Odisha (20%).

**Table 3.7**

**Distribution of DML by State of Origin and Religion**

State	Hindu (Number of Responses)	Hindu (%)	Muslim (Number of Responses)	Muslim (%)	Christian (Number of Responses)	Christian (%)	Total Number of Respondents
Uttar Pradesh	45	81.82 (81.65)	9	16.36 (16.51)	1	1.82 (0.92)	55
Assam	30	41.10 (40.16)	34	46.58 (45.67)	9	12.33 (12.60)	73
West Bengal	44	47.83 (47.62)	46	50.00 (48.98)	2	2.17 (1.36)	92
Bihar	60	90.91 (88.72)	5	7.58 (6.77)	1	1.52 (1.50)	66
Odisha	22	73.33 (73.47)	2	6.67 (6.12)	6	20.00 (20.41)	30
Others	74	88.10 (85.29)	7	8.33 (7.65)	3	3.57 (2.35)	84

Sources (i) Field study (ii) Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation, "Domestic Migrant Labour in Kerala" Thiruvananthapuram 2013

Note: Figures in the bracket are the data reported in the study of Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation, "Domestic Migrant Labour in Kerala" Thiruvananthapuram 2013

As is evident from Table 3.8 domestic migrant labourers are drawn currently from different social base. It is quite evident that the majority of migrant labourers belong to backward classes. About 31.3 percent are Scheduled Castes against 26.2 percent OBCs followed by 24.7 percent Scheduled Tribes. On the other hand, just about 17.8 percent of the DML belong to general category. It is quite significant to understand that most of the migrant labourers belong to socially and economically marginalized.

**Table 3.8**

**Castes: Distribution of DML in Kerala**

Caste	Number of Responses	%
Schedule Castes (SC)	125	31.3
Schedule Tribes (ST)	99	24.7
Other Backward community (OBC)	105	26.2
General Category	71	17.8
Total	400	100

*Source: Field Survey*

### **3.3 Occupational Pattern of DML**

Now let us analyze the pattern of migration and employment. DML is seen across both rural and urban areas of Kerala. While the migrant laborers were working primarily in the construction sector as unskilled labour in the beginning stage, currently there is a drastic change in the trend. Now they are employed in all the major sectors - agriculture , manufacturing and service sectors. In agriculture sector some of them work as coconut tree climbers, of which there is a severe shortage in Kerala. Predominantly linked to construction activities, their presence is significant in hotels and restaurants, brick kilns, hospitality, and in manufacturing industries. "One can see crowds of DML ranging from hundreds to thousands in the suburbs of Thrissur, Kannur, Ernakulam and Thiruvananthapuram cities". They have not only outnumbered the local workers in many professions but they have also totally replaced them. This is happening not only in manual labour sector, but also in the manufacturing sector and also in certain specific services/professions like hospitality"(Narayana, Venkiteswaran and Joseph ,2013).

**Table 3.9**  
**Employer Pattern of DML in Kerala**

Employer	Number of Responses	%
Contractor	266	66.5
Casual Employer	131	32.75
Regular Employer	3	0.75
Total	400	100

*Source: Field Study*

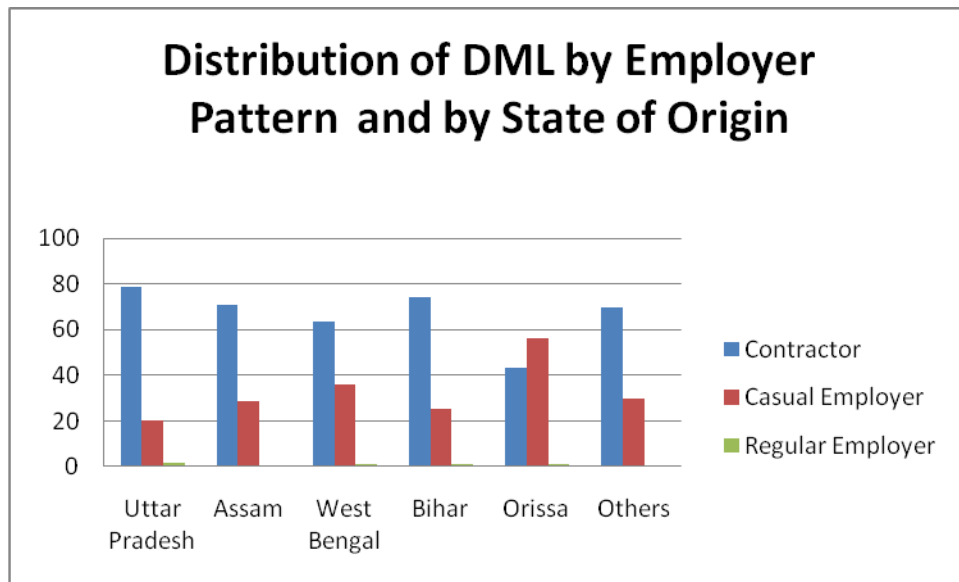
As is presented in Table 3.9 the distribution of DML by employer pattern clearly indicates that contractors employ 66.5 percent migrant laborers while casual employers 32.75 percent . However, regular employers take just 0.75 percent migrant laborers. The distribution of DML by employer pattern and by State of origin is reported in Table 3.10 and Fig 3.4. About 63.04 percent migrant laborers from West Bengal work with contractors while 35.87 percent are with casual employer and a small section (1.09%) are with regular employers. As reported in the Table 3.10, there are variations of occupation in respect of DML by state of origin. It may be noted that Perumbavur area in Ernakulum district has a cluster of over 600 plywood manufacturing units which engage a large number domestic migrant laborers and the bulk of them (66%) work under contractors.

**Table 3.10**  
**Distribution of DML by Employer Pattern and by State of Origin**

State	Contractor: Number of Responses	Contractor (%)	Casual Employer: Number of Responses	Casual Employer (%)	Regular Employer: Number of Responses	Regular Employer (%)	Total
Uttar Pradesh	43	78.18	11	20	1	1.82	55
Assam	51	69.86	21	28.77	1	1.37	73
West Bengal	58	63.04	33	35.87	1	1.09	92
Bihar	48	72.73	17	25.76	1	1.52	66
Orissa	13	43.33	16	53.33	1	3.33	30
Others	59	70.24	24	28.57	1	1.19	84

*Sources: Field Survey*

Fig: 3.4



As is evident from Table 3.11, about 64 percent DML under the survey are unskilled labourers while just 36 percent are skilled. The sector wise analysis indicates that the construction sector has the highest percentage of migrant labourers (49.75%) followed by manufacturing (11.25%), hotel and restaurant (10%), trade (9%) and agriculture (3.25%). Though a large numbers of DML are employed in all the major sectors of Kerala majority of them are unskilled labourers.

Table 3.11

**Skilled and Unskilled DML: Sector wise Analysis**

Occupation	Agriculture		Construction		Hotel and Restaurant		Manufacturing		Trade		Others		Total number of responses	Total (%)
	Number of Responses	(%)	Number of Responses	(%)	Number of Responses	%	Number of Responses	(%)	Number of Responses	(%)	Number of Responses	(%)		
Skilled Laborers	3	2.08	79	54.86	10	6.94	29	20.14	6	4.17	17	11.81	144	36
Unskilled Laborers	10	3.91	120	46.88	30	11.72	16	6.25	30	11.72	50	19.53	256	64
Total	13	3.25	199	49.75	40	10.00	45	11.25	36	9.00	67	16.75	400	100

Source: Field Survey

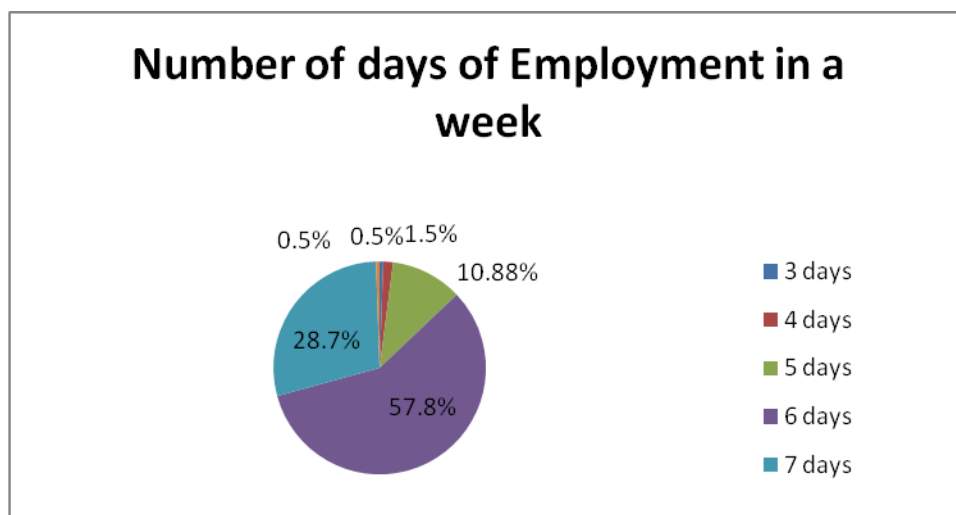
The working pattern of DML in Kerala is presented in Table 3.12 and Fig 3.5. It is significant to understand that about 57.75 percent DML covered under the survey works for 6 days in week while another 28.75 for the whole week without any break. It is a matter of serious concern that a large number of DML work for seven days in a week without any break.

**Table 3.12**  
**Number of Days of Employment in a Week**

Days in Week (No)	Responses (No)	Response (%)
3	2	0.50
4	6	1.50
5	44	11
6	231	57.75
7	115	28.75
No Response	2	0.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey*

**Fig:3.5**





The daily wages of DML in Kerala is reported in Table 3.13 and Fig 3.6. It is evident that all the migrant laborers get higher wage compared to the wage rate prevailing in the respective home state. It is interesting to note that about 29.25 percent migrant laborers get an average daily wage up to Rs.250 while for 35.5 percent it is in the range of Rs.251-Rs.400. About 23 percent DML receive Rs 401- Rs. 500 as daily wage. While about 9.75 percent DML gets Rs 501- Rs. 600 as daily wage, a small section (2.5%) receives daily wage to the amount of over Rs.600.

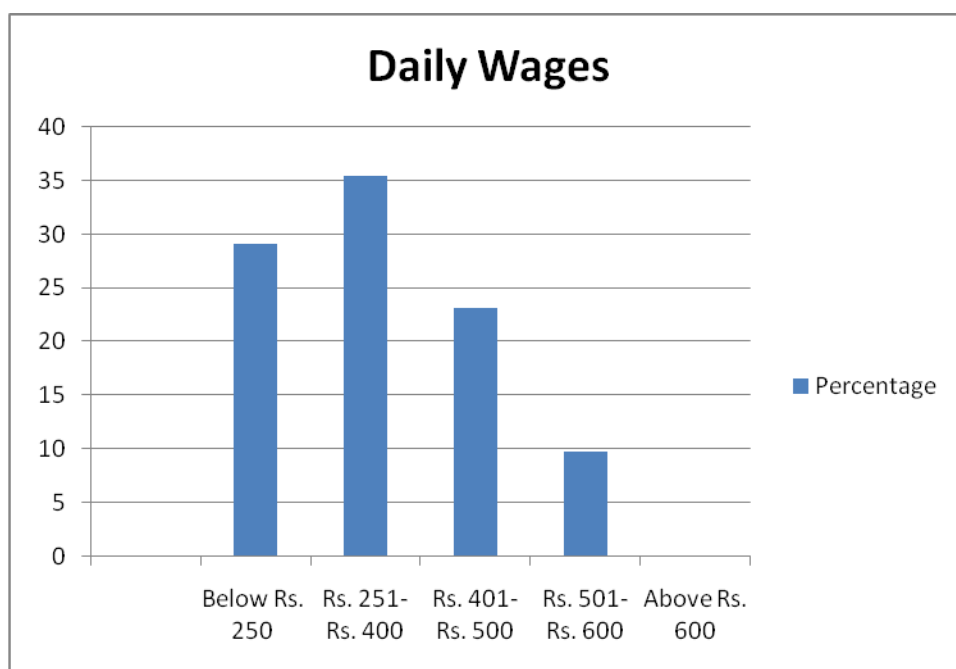
**Table 3.13**  
**Daily Wage of Migrant Labourers**

Wages per Day (Rs.)	Number of Responses	Percentage
Up to 250	117	29.25
251-400	142	35.50
401-500	92	23.0
501-600	39	9.75
Above 600	10	2.50
Total	400	100

*Source: Field Survey*

*Note: In most cases migrant labourers are given free accommodation*

**Fig: 3.6**



*Note: In most cases migrant labourers are given free accommodation*

Unfortunately, awareness level of DML about minimum wages and welfare schemes is abysmally low. As is presented in Table 3.14 just about 7 percent is aware of legal provisions for minimum wage. The level of awareness about insurance facilities is 12 percent while that of welfare schemes is 5 percent and pension schemes is just 2 percent. In this context, it is interesting to understand that children of some migrant labourers get the benefit of good education system in Kerala. As is evident from Box No: 3.1 and Box No: 3.2 a few children have made remarkable achievements in school examinations held in 2014.

**Table: 3.14**  
**Wages and Schemes: Awareness Level of DML**

Schemes	Number of Responses	%
Minimum wages	28	7
Insurance schemes	48	12
Pension schemes	8	2
Welfare schemes	20	5
Legal rights	28	7

*Source: Field survey*

*Note: Multiple Response Questions*

**Box No. 3.1**

**SSLC Performance of Children of Migrant Labourer from Bihar**

A child of Migrant Labourer from Bihar was appeared in SSLC examination in Malappuram District of Kerala in April 2014. Asif Kamal is one among 11 members of a poor family in the state of Bihar. His 10 brothers are now living in Bihar and Kamal came to Kerala along with his uncle in 2011. His uncle has been working as DML for the last eight years. School education was a dream for Kamal in Bihar due to the poverty and large size of the family. His uncle had brought him to Kerala to provide his education and livelihood. While going to school. Kamal was helping his uncle in the work also. Kamal has been studying in Kerala from 8<sup>th</sup> standard onwards though he spent a portion of his time to help his uncle in the work. Kamal who appeared in SSLC exam in 2014 has got 'A plus grade in all the subjects. His remarkable achievement is an example of children of DML who got the benefit of good school education system in Kerala.

*Source : Mathrubhumi Malayalam Daily Newspaper in Kozhikode edition 18 April, 2014*

### Box No. 3.2

#### **SSLC 2014: Excellent Performance of two sons of migrant labourer from Bihar**

Pulesor from Bihar has been working in Kerala for the last 15 years. His two sons, P. Mohan Kumar and P. Bharat Kumar, have been studying in Ramanattukara School in Malappuram from class 2<sup>nd</sup> onwards. In the SSLC examination held in 2014 both the brothers have got A Plus in all the subjects. This example indicates that children of some migrant labourers get the benefit of better school education system in Kerala.

*Source: Mathrubhumi Malayalam Daily Newspaper in Kozhikode edition 21 April, 2014*

The analysis of the pattern of duration of stay of migrant laborers in Kerala is presented in Table 3.15 and Fig 3.7. About 35.75 percent DML stays in Kerala for a period of 2-3 years while 28.25 percent stays up to 2 years. It is important to understand that 10.75 percent DML is in Kerala for a period of over 5 years. It may be noted about 15 percent respondents have reported they were not staying in Kerala on a continuous basis as they had taken a break due to various reasons. It is found that about 55 percent DML takes one month vacation to go to the home state. Some of them, about 6 percent, go to home state once in two years period.

**Table 3.15**

#### **Period of Stay in Kerala**

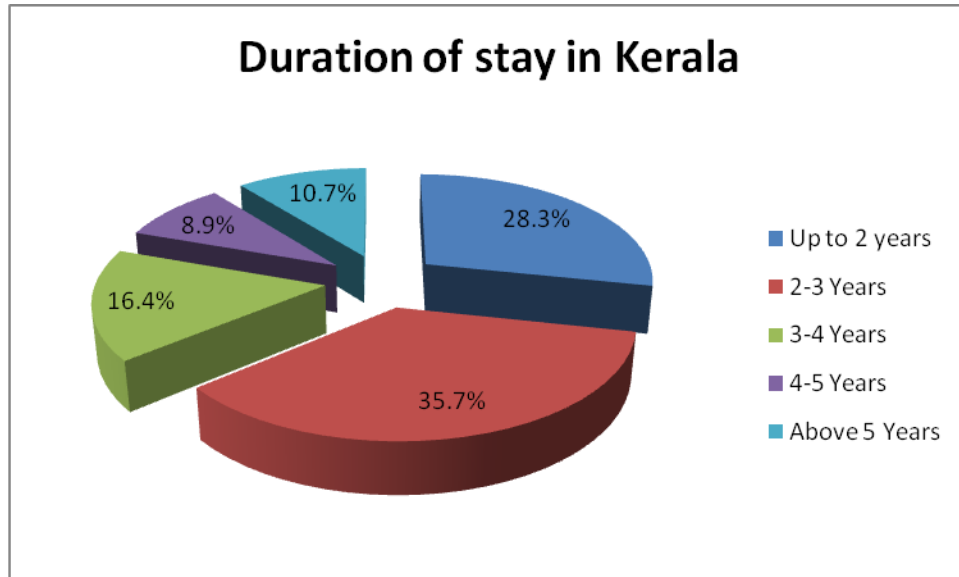
Duration of stay in Kerala	Number of Responses	%
Up to 2 years	113	28.25
2-3 Years	143	35.75
3-4 Years	66	16.50
4-5 Years	35	8.75
Above 5 Years	43	10.75
Total	400	100

*Source: Field Survey*

*Note: About 15 percent have reported a break of 1 to 8 months during the period of stay as the migrants had gone back to home state*

Similarly, a large number of migrant laborers have been changing the place of stay quite often due to frequent changes in worksite or employer.

**Fig: 3.7**



### **3.3 Income and Expenditure Pattern of Migrant Labourers**

By and large, DML spends a small portion of their income in Kerala and moreover, most of them send the net income to their respective home State monthly on a regular basis. The expenditure of both skilled and unskilled labourers is found to be quite low. Several of them get free accommodation from the employer and this may be one of the reasons of low expenditure. The income - expenditure pattern of migrant labourers is reported in Table 3.16 and Fig 3.8. The average monthly income of a skilled labourer is Rs. 30,250 while that of unskilled labourer is Rs. 22700. On the other hand, the average monthly expenditure of a skilled labourer is Rs. 1520 against Rs.1510 of unskilled labourer.

**Table: 3.16**

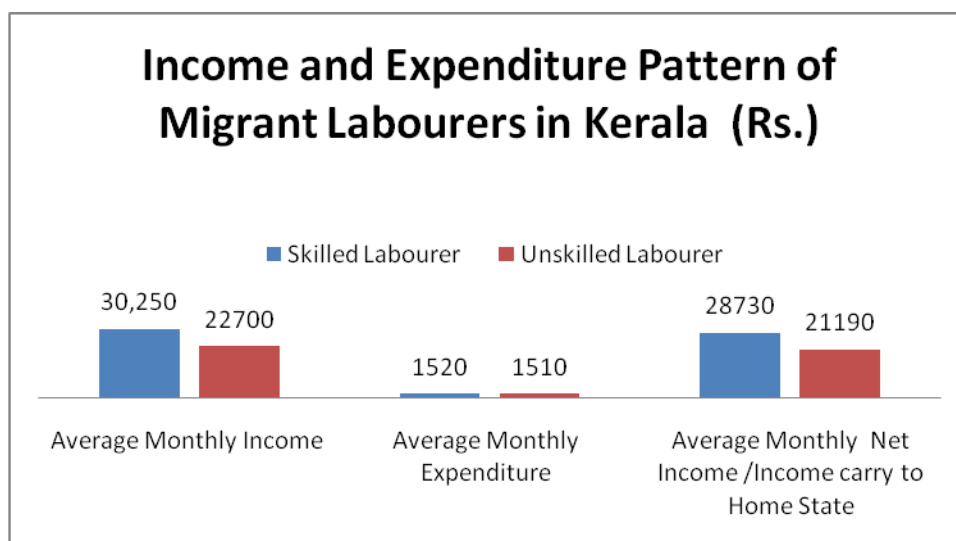
**Income and Expenditure Pattern of Migrant Laborers in Kerala**

	Average Monthly Income (Rs)	Average Monthly Expenditure (Rs)	Average Monthly Net Income /Income carry to Home State(Rs)
Skilled Labourer	30,250	1520	28730
Unskilled Labourer	22,700	1510	21190

*Source: Field Survey*

*Note: This figure include the payment for their overtime work*

**Fig: 3.8**



*NB: This figure include the payment for their overtime work*

*Source: Field Survey*

In nutshell, agents, contractors, friends and relatives are instrumental in channelizing a large number of labourers from distant parts of India to Kerala. While Kerala state has migrant labourers from almost all the states of India and Nepal, majority of them are from West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha. It is pertinent to note that the DML are male and about 75 percent of them are in the age group of 18-29 years. Their period of stay is neither short nor long as most of migrant laborers leave Kerala after 3-4 years period of work.

## Chapter 4

### Major Problems of Migrant Laborers in Kerala

In the recent past some scholars have studied the problems of domestic migrant laborers in select Indian States. The poor labourers leave their villages and migrate to states like Kerala to address various problems such as rural indebtedness and uncertainty of agricultural income. Quite domestic migrant labourers in India are denied labour rights, basic amenities like housing and sanitation etc (Menon 2013). Vulnerability of the migrant labourers is shaped by many factors, including social and political marginalization and lack of socio-economic and societal resources (Derose et al 2007). Living in a host state where the migrants may not master the official language, are unfamiliar with the working of the legal system and administration, detached from traditional support and family networks, exposed to a society with ways of life or culture, which they may find at times alien, they may face situation that can leave them completely disoriented and disturbed (Varennnes 2003). All these negative factors undermine the impact of migration. The resolution and conclusions of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Session of International Labour Conference, 2004, observed that despite some positive effects of migrant workers, a significant number of migrants face undue hardships and abuses in form of low wages, poor working conditions, absence of social protection, social exclusion etc (ILO 2004). Domestic migrant laborers in Kerala faces diverse problems quite similar to the problems faced by international migrants (Ajit Kumar 2011). The working conditions of the migrants in Kerala need to be discussed with a focus on the vulnerability of low and semi-skilled men, women and children who need extra protection.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> DML in Kerala are predominantly male. However, women and children accompany the male DML in exceptional cases. Children who are sons/daughters or relatives of DML are engaged in work or education or both.

**Table 4.1**  
**Problems of Migrant Laborers in Kerala Reported by Four Categories of Respondents**<sup>3</sup>

Types of Problems	Number of Responses	%
Absence of proper accommodation/ Poor quality of accommodation	824	82.4
Inadequate safeguards / high risk in construction sector	796	79.6
Non- Provisioning of entitlements of government schemes	601	60.1
Poor access to available schemes and services due to the lack of information and language barriers	523	52.3
Distress from ill treatment of local (Malayalee) laborer	501	50.1
Long working hours	420	42
Absence of leisure time/ entertainment	390	39
Poor social interaction and lack of integration with the local community	385	38.5
Limited access to health care services	380	38
Distress from ill treatment/ discrimination of employer	304	30.4
Exploitation of migrant labourers by middleman/agents and the resultant low wage	298	29.8

Source: Field Survey

Note (1) Multiple Response Questions

Note (2): A significant number of domestic migrant labourers are unaware of their problems, especially the long working hours and lack of leisure or entertainment. DML, mostly young and without family members in Kerala prefer to work overtime and earn maximum amount of salary

Government of Kerala is also aware of certain problems of migrant laborers in Kerala. "Working conditions of the inter-state migrant workmen are dealt with the Inter State Migrant Workmen Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service Act, 1979. As per the provision of the Act the contractor have to obtain a recruitment license from the state from where the workers are recruited (Original State) and an

<sup>3</sup> A total of 1000 respondents which cover all the four categories, have reported diverse problems that have been broadly categorized under eleven heads. The respondents are local laborers, domestic migrant laborers, elected representatives, representatives of NGOs and prominent citizens.

employment license from the state where they are employed (Recipient State). Accordingly the contractor and the principal employer become liable for ensuring the provisions envisaged in the enactment as an immediate employer and the principal employer respectively. But usually these workers cannot be brought under the purview of the enactment due to lack of statutory ingredients required to attract the ambit of the enactment such as an intermediary third party/contractor between the Principal employer and the workmen. These workers are compelled to live in groups and unhygienic circumstances near to their working place without proper health facilities” (Government of Kerala 2013). The results of our field survey indicate that DML in Kerala are confronted with a wide range of problems ( See Table 4.1) . These include non- provisioning of entitlements of government schemes, poor access to available schemes and services, poor quality of accommodation, long working hours, limited access to health care services, poor social interaction and lack of integration with the local community, inadequate safeguards and high risk in construction sector, exploitation of migrant labourers by agents and the resultant low wage. These problems are analyzed in the following paragraphs under six heads: (1) occupational problems, (2) health- related problems, (3) lack of access to rights and entitlements for migrant laborers, (4) absence of proper accommodation and quality of life, (5) lack of identity and registration and (6) social exclusion of migrant laborers.

#### **4.1 Occupational Problems**

*4.1.1 Long Working Hours:* Working hours of migrant labourers are in the range of 8-14 hours and they work for 6 days in a week. They do not have much time for entertainment while just a small section of migrant labourers gets relaxation and entertainment. About 15 percent stays in their rooms watching movies on television as other forms of entertainments are reported by just 8 percent.

*4.1.2 High Risk in Construction and Manufacturing Sectors.* As is presented in Table 4.2, about 50 migrant laborers in the construction sector meet with an accidental death in a month. Inadequate safeguards and absence of insurance coverage are the common problems in the construction sector. There is no proper reporting of death of migrant laborers due to the difficulties in identification and lack of identity documents. It is found that some contractors had given wrong information to the relatives after the accidental death in the work site. In some cases dead bodies were not even sent to their native place as there is a nexus between contractors/agents and a few private medical colleges. It is reported that an unclaimed dead body is sold to private medical colleges for over Rs. 2 lacs. The poor financial situation of relatives is also responsible for the non-claim of dead bodies.

*4.1.3 Exploitation by Agents:* The exploitation of migrant labourers by middlemen/agents has reduced the wage income of migrant labourers. It is reported that a considerable number of migrant laborer, at the time of leaving the home state, had agreed to work at a lower wage than the amount offered by the



employer. The difference between the wage offers by the employer and wage agreed by the labourer is taken away by the middleman or agents.

**Table 4.2**  
**Monthly Death Rate of DML in Kerala**

Nature of Death of DML	No of persons per month	%
Accidental death rate in construction sector	50	70.42
Suicide	12	16.94
Death caused by Stomach related diseases	2	2.8
Death due to heart ailment/heart attack	2	2.8
Others	5	7.04
Total	71	100

*Sources : (i) Field Survey (ii) Various Medical Colleges in Kerala*

Exploitation and cheating by agents have resulted in paying of low salary to about 7 percent laborer who are unhappy with the agents as they are given less salary causing severe financial distress . It is also found that about 13 per cent migrant labourers are not given minimum wages.

## **4.2 Health- related Problems**

**4.2.1 Unhealthy Living Conditions:** Health care of DML is totally neglected as most of them lives in unhealthy conditions facing various health related risks. A large number of DML lives in certain housing clusters where cleanliness is not maintained. Most of the migrant workers, especially the construction workers are accommodated in crowded rooms with minimum facilities like electricity, water and toilet. As is evident from Box 4.1 , district administrations in Kerala have started penal actions against employers who maintain unhygienic labour camps. There is no mechanism to prevent spread of diseases by these migrants. Unauthorized dumping of waste by the migrant workers create environmental hazardous. It is pertinent to note that health care services for migrant workers are quite limited causing the spread of various diseases.

#### Box 4.1

##### **Poorly Maintained Labour Camp Closed by the District Administration in Kochi**

A labour camp, set up by a private construction company, for housing over 200 migrant labourers in Ernakulum district are closed by the district administration on 21 May 2014. The labour camp was maintained in extremely unhygienic conditions without following any health and safety parameters. About 15 laborers were accommodated in a room meant for just 5 people. There was no proper drainage system. Shri, M. G. Rajamanikyam the District Collector, Ernakulam has ordered to close the labour camp in view of the possibility of outbreak of disease in forthcoming monsoon.

*Source: Mathrubhoomi, Malayalam daily, Kochi edition, 23 May 2014*

**4.2.2 Communicable Diseases:** By and large, migrant laborers are the poorest section from the poorer States and mostly illiterates. It is reported that some of them are carriers of communicable diseases. In recent past, cases of Malaria, Dengue fever, Chikungunia, Japanese encephalitis, Filariasis and other viral diseases were reported from some parts of Kerala. A large number of local people feel that domestic migrants are the carriers of such diseases. As is evident from Box 4. 2, medical camps organized by communities and local government institutions have identified such cases.

#### Box 4.2

##### **Medical Camp and Registration of Migrant Laborers with Police Station : A Joint initiatives of Panchayats and Municipalities**

In Punalur of Kollam district of Kerala, a few Panchayats and Punalur Municipality in cooperation with the local police station have taken certain steps to address problems of migrant labourers. A medical camp was organized for migrant labourers in June 2013. Over 750 migrant laborers who got registered their names during the medical camp and identity cards are issued to them by the police station. The registered labourers are examined in hospitals during March April 2014. A total of 12 migrant labourers are diagnosed as patients of TB and Hepatitis B and sent back to their respective home State.

*Source: Mathrubhumi Malayalam daily, Delhi Edition, dated 25 May 2014*

As discussed earlier, a large number of migrant workers tend to be employed in construction sectors and employers do not comply with health and safety laws ( see Box 4.3) . The migrant laborers in construction sector are exposed to high risks.

#### **Box 4.3**

##### **Labour Camps Exposed to High Risks in Permubavoor in Ernakulam District**

Over 600 plywood factories that have been functioning in Vengola Gram Panchayat area of Permubavoor are mainly operated with migrant labourers. These migrant workers are given accommodated in labor camps. It is found that a labour camp in Vengola meant for accommodation of 30 people has accommodated over 100 migrant labourers without following any hygienic and other safety measures. Similar cases are found in the neighboring Panchayats in Ernakulum district. In view of the environmental and health hazards, a team of district health officials led by Dr.Hazeena Mohammad DMO and Shri P.N.Srinivasan, District Rural Health Officer has raided many of these labour camps and taken penal actions in May 2014.

*Source: Field Survey*

**4.2.3 Overtime Work:** Workers protection like normal working hours and scheduled breaks are not being granted and in many cases migrants may have to work for long hours without any break affecting their health adversely.

#### **Box 4.4**

##### **HAMARAH- Identity Card Issued by the District Medical Office Malapuram**

An identity card namely “HAMARAH” was issued to migrant labourers in the district of Malappuram. HAMARAH is an abbreviation for “Humanitarians Approach in Migrants Ailment Rescue and Health”. The card was issued by the District Medical Office (DMO) Malapuram district of Kerala. The card was filled with relevant information such as home address, blood group, telephone numbers , etc., HAMARAH was issued after a detailed survey and campaign with the involvement of local volunteers. Even some of the migrant labourers have extended some voluntary services in the implementation of these activities. HAMARAH is being used both as an identity card and in accessing medical facilities.

*Source: Malayala Manorama Malayalam Daily, Delhi Edition, dated 28.Nov. 2013*

### **4.3 No Access to Rights and Entitlements for Migrant Laborers**

Kerala is acclaimed nationally and internationally with respect to the social security and welfare measures it has extended for many years. The policy of Government of Kerala states that every employee or worker should be a member in any of the Welfare Board and welfare support they must be provided by the State throughout their lives. Accordingly, about 45 lakh of labour force in the State of Kerala are supported under any one of the Social Security schemes. There are 19 Labour Welfare Fund Boards under the Department. The Labour laws and Labour welfare schemes implemented by state is much higher than that of other states in India (Government of Kerala 2013).

In contrast migrant labourers in Kerala do not get the benefit of these welfare measures. Both employers of migrant labourers and government institutions at state level or national level do not pay any attention in providing welfare measures to migrant labourers. Hence their entitlements are not availed by DML in Kerala. There is a lack of awareness on legal and social security measures in Kerala, the host state. Migrant labourers do not have access to education, health service welfare schemes and social security scheme. It is the non-provisioning of entitlements and non- portability of benefits provided by central and home state are what create problems for the migrants. The benefits of some of the social security measures including RSBY benefits are not available to them. All the three categories of child migrants- child who migrate with family members, child migrate independently without parents or guardians and children who are born to migrants in Kerala have the right to avail free education within the framework of RTE Act. Children of migrants who stay back in the home state needs support of home states and Government of India .It is unfortunate that trade unions are not really concerned about children of domestic migrant labourers. Most of the migrant labourers are unaware of their rights while there is no cell to present their grievances before the officials.

### **4.4 Absence of Proper Accommodation and Quality of Life**

Living conditions of the Domestic Migrant Labour in Kerala are miserable. DML, by and large, stay together and work together on the basis of language. About 90 percent have common cooking with their own groups while individual cooking is reported by only 5 percent of the DML. About 42 percent migrants under the survey have been paying rent for the accommodation while the remaining 58 percent gets the accommodation from the employer as the part of their wage package. In both cases, the quality of accommodation was quite poor though basic necessities such as electricity, water and common toilets are available.

**Table 4.3**  
**DML: Pattern of Rental Accommodation in Kerala**

Nature of Accommodation	Number of Responses	Responses (%)
Single room sharing without toilet/without kitchen	40	10
Single room sharing with toilet facilities	44	11
Single room sharing room with kitchen facilities	48	12
House sharing-Single room accommodation with toilet facilities	60	15
House sharing-Single room with kitchen facilities	56	14
Independent House	16	4
Temporary sheds	68	17
Others	68	17
Total	400	100

*Source: Field survey*

*Note: Accommodation is on both payment of monthly rent and rent free as a part of contract with the employee*

As is shown in Table 4.3 there are variations in respect of the pattern and nature of the rented accommodation. Several of them do not have a proper rental accommodation while 10 percent respondents have single room sharing without toilet or kitchen, 11 percent have single room sharing with toilet facilities and another 12 percent have single room sharing with kitchen facilities. It is important to understand that about 17 percent stays in temporary sheds provided at the manufacturing or construction sites. Some employers provide free housing to migrant workers with poorly maintained toilets and unsafe water. The accommodation pattern is related to the income and nature of work of DML. About 3 percent DML have brought their families and the 77 percent are living on a room sharing basis. We can safely conclude that majority of them have just sleeping space and many of them sleep on the floor. It is a matter of serious concern that a large number of migrant laborers have been staying in sheds at the construction site where 5-10 workers live in a single room with bare minimum facilities. In the state of Kerala which has a high quality of life, domestic migrant labourers lead a poor quality of life.

#### **4.5 Lack of Identity and Registration**

Most of migrant labourers, 99.25 percent, do not have any documentation of identity proof or registration issued by any authorities in Kerala (see Table 4.4). However, about 93 percent DML have identity cards issued by their respective home state.

**Table 4.4**  
**Identity Cards of DML in Home States and Kerala: Aggregate Level**

	ID Issued by Home State: Number of Responses	ID Issued by Home States (%)	ID Issued by Kerala: Number of Responses	ID Issued by Kerala (%)
<b>Total ID holders</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.75</b>
<b>Without ID Cards</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>99.25</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey*

Document wise details of identity cards of DML issued by Home States or State of Kerala are reported in Table 4.5. About 73 percent DML have voter's ID card issued by their home States while 20 percent have Addhar Card. About four percent of the DML have an ID card issued by their Gram Panchayat. Just 0.25 percent DML has got driving license issued from Government of Kerala. Practically DML do not have identity cards issued by State of Kerala. As is evident from Box 4.4, a health card namely "HAMARAH" was issued by district medical officer (DMO) of Malappuram to a few migrant labourers to enable them in availing free medical services. Currently this card is being used as an identity card.

**Table 4.5**  
**Identity Cards of DML in Home States and Kerala: Document Wise**

	Number of Responses	Issued by Home states (%)	Number of Responses	Issued by Host States (%)
Aadhaar	80	20	0	0
Voter ID	292	73	0	0
PAN Card	16	4	0	0
Driving License	2	0.5	1	0.25
ID issued by gram Panchayats/Municipality / Health Department	16	4	2	0.5
<b>Total ID holders</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.75</b>
<b>Without ID Cards</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>99.25</b>

*Source: Field survey*  
*Multiple Response Questions*

It is found that some of the employers do not register them with labour department to escape from liabilities and reduced employer benefits. This causes harm to DML. It is for the interest of both the stakeholders -migrant labourers, employer, local community and state government- all DML should get

registered. It is a matter of concern that many employers and labourers are not inclined to get registered with any firm, institution or organization of Kerala. As is evident from Box 4.5, some of the trade unions in Kerala have taken certain initiatives to address these problems.

**Box: 4.5**

**Membership Card for Migrant Labourers: Role of Trade Union**

Recently trade unions have started to organize domestic migrant labourers. INTUC has registered an organization, “Indian National Building, Roads and other Construction workers Congress (INTUC)” in March 2012, to provide a common platform to domestic migrant labourers. This organization has issued membership card with laminated photo and basic identification details to a few migrant laborers. Office bearers of the organization have indicated that they have been working to enhance the welfare DML members by focusing on various activities such as (1) advocacy programmes to introduce Food Security Schemes for domestic migrant labourers (2) setting up of welfare fund with government and private sector support (3) organize labor camps (4) provide insurance coverage with government and private sector support (5) issue identity card through Zilla Panchayat (6) help in availing minimum wages (7) provide financial support in case of death and other contingencies and (8) Organize cultural and social programmes to enhance the social integration of DML.

*Source: Field Survey*

#### **4.6 Social Exclusion**

Migrant labourers are excluded from the local community and the social exclusion seems to be a typical condition for the migrants. They are generally treated as second-class citizens and outsiders. Most of migrant labourers are looked down upon by the local community. The social exclusion of migrant labourers can be ascribed to the following reasons:

*4.6.1 Negative Perception of Local Community:* A large number of local people expressed fear and apprehensions about the involvement migrant labourers in crime and deterioration of public health. There are a few cases of crime with the involvement of DML. Hence local community considers them as a threat to law and order in the locality. Some cases of DML who were carriers of diseases that were eradicated from Kerala were reported recently. Migrant labourers are accused of dumping food and other wastes into common land and rivers/canals thus polluting the environment. There is a fear among local community and local governments that DML will dominate the youth segment of Kerala in the near future as the birth rate in Kerala is reduced drastically and educated youth in Kerala seeks employment outside state and outside country.

**Table 4.6**  
**Forms of Prejudices or Discrimination: Responses of Four categories of Responders<sup>4</sup>**

Forms of Prejudices/ Discrimination	Number of Responses	%	Remarks
Local people in Kerala consider DML as possible carriers of diseases that were eradicated from Kerala	432	43.2	Some cases of DML who were carriers of diseases that were eradicated from Kerala were reported
Local people believe migrant labourers are polluting the environment by dumping wastes in public places	935	93.5	Migrant labourers are accused of dumping food and other wastes into common land and rivers/canals thus polluting the environment
Local people are skeptical about the increasing petty crimes committed by the migrant workers	325	32.5	Migrant workers are floating from one job site to another within Kerala without proper identity and registration
Local people consider migrant laborers as outsiders and do not treat them as equals in the society. Social exclusion of DML a reality	921	92.1	Most of the DML cannot communicate in Malayalam, the local language. This has caused a critical gap.
Employers discriminate DML in the labour market in respect of wages and accommodation.	512	51.2	A significant number of DML do not have much complaint about the wage discrimination as the current wage is quite attractive to them compared to the home State.

*Source: Field Survey*

*Note: Multiple Response Questions and the total number of respondents are 1000*

<sup>4</sup> All the four categories of respondents which cover 1000 people have indicated various forms of prejudices and discriminations. These are presented under five broad heads.



**4.6.2 Concern of State and Local Government from the Threat of Security and Public Health:** There are illegal foreign migrants amongst domestic migrant labourers who pose a definite security risk to the country. This has become an area of concern to both government of Kerala and local community ( see Box 4.6). For example, the Perumbavur Municipality has taken some initiatives in sensitizing members of local community about the precautions to be taken while renting of houses to migrant laborers. Landlords who rent out houses to DML are advised to follow certain steps. These include verification of documents such as ID cards- either election IDs or certificates issued by their Gram Panchayat. Migrant labourers should be introduced to the landlord by a senior member among them known to the landlord. Individual tenants should not be entertained, unless they have a proper job in a reputed firm. According to the guidelines of Perumbavur Municipality movements of each tenant should be closely monitored by group leaders and the local community. Similar steps and precautionary measures are being taken by other local government institutions. There are serious concerns about the inflow of illegal migrant labourers and these concerns have now resulted in to the social exclusion of migrant laborers in Kerala.

**Box: 4.6**

**Inflow of Migrants to Kerala and Drug Trafficking and other Criminal Activities: Concern of Government of Kerala**

Home minister of Kerala expressed concern at the increased inflow of migrants to Kerala. It is estimated that 20 percent of migrant laborers from West Bengal are citizens of Bangladesh who come to Kerala with fake identity documents issued by Government of West Bengal. According to Home Minister some of them are linked to drugs trafficking and other criminal activities. Some of the domestic migrant labours have serious health problems as certain eradicated diseases have now started to report from Kerala. Kerala police has started to watch the situation with utmost care and Government of Kerala is planning to form police task force and district level vigilance system to deal with the situation.

Source: *Malayala Manorama Malayalam daily, Delhi Edition, dated 31 May 2014*

**4.6.3 Demographic and Gender Dimensions:** About 75 per cent DML are young and able-bodied belonging to the age group of 18 to 30 years. More importantly, almost all of them are male, and only a very small minority has brought their families with them. Of late, a few of the migrant laborers have brought their wives resulting in attendant problems. As a large section of migrant laborers live in Kerala without a female counterpart, prostitution is rampant among them. A recent study sponsored by Government of Kerala has also indicated this problem. "The female presence is limited to certain specific sectors like jewelry work and brick kilns etc. The most obvious and immediate issue such a huge population, that too so predominantly male and young, raises is that related to their emotional and sexual

needs. According to the volunteers of Kerala State Aids Control Society, this sudden influx of migrant male population into Kerala, who earn wages and has extra money to spend, has given a boost to local sex industry". Prostitution is rampant among them, but is carried out under veils of secrecy; Moreover, they also are careful not to invite the wrath of local moral policing. All this, along with the total lack of knowledge about safe sex and the use of condoms make them a section that is very vulnerable to fatal infections and diseases" (Narayana, Venkiteswaran and Joseph ,2013).

*4.6.4 Prejudices or Discriminations:* DML in Kerala has been facing different forms of prejudices and discriminations. The results of the field survey in respect of these prejudices and discriminations are presented in Table 4.6. Local people consider DML as possible carriers of diseases that were eradicated from Kerala and they are under the impression that migrant laborers are polluting the environment. Employers discriminate DML in the labour market in respect of wages and accommodation. The migrant laborers usually keep away from direct communication with the native people and most of them speak only in mother tongue, and hence interactions with the locals are quite restricted. The total insularity of DML from the local population and the absence of social integration with the local community are area of concerns. Petty crimes by the migrant workers are the other concern of local community. Local people are very skeptical about movements of the migrant workers – A feeling of insecurity is prevailing among the locals. There are illegal foreign migrants amongst domestic migrant labourers who pose a definite security risk to the country. This has become an area of concern to both government of Kerala and local community. Also, the recruitment agents appear to have close links with construction and real estate mafia and underworld operators. The local community has a lot of apprehensions about DML. A large number of local people made expressions of fear and apprehension about the migrant labourer respect of crime and health. There are a few cases of crime with the involvement of DML. Hence local community considers them as a threat to law and order in the locality.

The forgoing analysis clearly indicates that migrant labourers in Kerala are confronted with a wide range of problems such as non- provisioning of entitlements of government schemes, poor access to available schemes and services, inadequate safeguards and high risk in construction sector, poor quality of accommodation, long working hours, limited access to health care services and social exclusion.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **5.1 Factors of Migration to Kerala**

Major determinants of migration of labourers to Kerala are compulsions from rural indebtedness, growing unemployment, poor income from agriculture in home state, pressure of large size of the family, catalytic role of recruitment agents, positive role of social network of migrants, high wage rate in Kerala and the preference of employers in Kerala for migrant laborers who are ready to work at low wage rate. The main reason behind migration is the employment considerations and the bleak employment prospect in the local labour markets. The difference in the economic opportunities between home states and Kerala is pushing the movement of labour.

#### **5.2 Channels of Labour Migration**

Friends and relatives are the largest channels of labour migration while contractors and agents continue as the other strong channels.

#### **5.3 States of Migration to Kerala**

Major portion of migrant laborers come to Kerala from West Bengal (23%), Assam (18.2%), Bihar (16.4%), Uttar Pradesh (14.83%) and Odisha (7.4%). Apart from these states about 21.1 percent migrant laborers come from other states such as Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

#### **5.4 Profile of Migrant Labourers**

5.4.1 Migrant laborers are male and about 75 percent are in the age group of 18-29 years. However, there are a few above the age of 36 years and under 18 years of age. Some of them come under the definition of child labourer while a few undergo school education in Kerala along with part-time work.

5.4.2 Religious profile of DML indicates that the majority are Hindus followed by Muslims. DML belong to Muslim religion are mostly from Assam and West Bengal. DML belong to Christian religion are mainly from Orissa.

5.4.3 Domestic migrant labourers are drawn currently from different social base. About 31.3 percent are Scheduled Castes against 26.2 percent OBCs followed by 24.7 percent Scheduled Tribes. Most of the migrant labourers belong to socially and economically marginalized.

## **5.5 Problems of Migrant Labourers in Kerala**

5.5.1 The exploitation of middleman and agents has reduced the salary income of migrant labourers. A considerable number of migrant laborers, at the time of leaving the home state, enter into an agreement to work at a lower salary than the amount offered by the employer.

5.5.2 Working hours of migrant labourers is in the range of 8-14 hours and they work for 6 days in a week. They do not have much time for entertainment. Just a small section of migrant labourers gets relaxation and entertainment.

5.5.3 High risk in construction and manufacturing sectors is a major area of concern.

5.5.4 Health care of domestic migrant laborers is totally neglected as significant number of them lives in unhealthy conditions facing various health related risks. A large number of DML lives in certain housing clusters where environment cleanliness is not maintained. Most of the migrant workers, especially the construction workers, are accommodated in crowded rooms with minimum facilities like electricity, water and toilet. There is no mechanism to prevent spread of diseases by these migrants. Unauthorized dumping of waste by the migrant workers create environmental hazardous. Healthcare services for migrant workers are limited causing the spread of the disease. Overtime work causes several health problems to migrant laborers.

5.5.5 Lack of access to rights and entitlements for migrant laborers is a major area of concern. Both employers of migrant labourers and government institutions at state level or national level do not pay any attention in providing welfare measures to migrant labourers. Hence their entitlements are not availed by DML in Kerala. There is a lack of awareness about legal and social security measures in Kerala. Migrant labourers do not have access to education, health services, welfare schemes and social security schemes. It is the non-provisioning of entitlements is what creates problems for the migrants.

5.5.6 Absence proper accommodation and poor quality of Life is another area of concern. Living conditions of the domestic migrant labourer in Kerala are miserable. DML stay together and work together on the basis of language. In both cases the quality of accommodation is quite poor though basic necessities such as electricity, water and common toilets are available.

## **5.6 Social Exclusion**

Various factors are responsible for the social exclusion of migrant labourers in Kerala. Both local community and state government of Kerala have negative perception about domestic migrant labourers. The state government has already initiated certain actions citing threat of security from the increasing

inflow of citizens of Bangladesh through West Bengal. Local people consider DML as possible carriers of diseases that were eradicated from Kerala.

## **5.7 Lack of Identity and Registration**

Migrant labourers do not have any documentation of identity proof or registration issued by any authorities in Kerala while most of them hold identity cards issued by their respective home state.

## **5.8 Reduction in the Vulnerability of Migrant Labourers: Major Recommendations**

It is important to understand that Government of Kerala has started to take some initiatives to address the problems of migrant labourers. Its policy outlook in relation to labourers says, “Given the changing dynamics of the employment landscape of the state, the role of the Labour Department needs to be restructured to ensure the long term employer-employee relationship. The issues confronting the vulnerable sections of the labour are to be addressed through effective implementation of labour laws and focused welfare policies. A realization has dawned upon all the stakeholders that most vulnerable sections of the labour resources viz. migrant labour, women and vast mass of labour working in the unorganized of informal sector need special attention”. (Government of Kerala, 2013). In this context, let us discuss certain concrete measures.

### **5.8.1 Enactment of a Viable Law by Kerala to address vulnerabilities of Migrant Labourers**

Migration within the country is a fundamental right. There is a need for policy initiatives to ensure the rights of the labour force, especially unskilled, in search of livelihood. The government of Kerala needs to enact a viable law for the benefit of migrant labourers from various Indian states. It is the duty of Kerala state to safeguard migrant labourers and to treat them as citizens without any discrimination in the name of caste creed or nativity. The legislation can address various complex issues faced by both migrant laborers and local community. The legislation is required to ensure minimum wages, basic needs and other welfare measures. Migrant laborers contribute significantly to the growth of Kerala's economy and they form an important base for supply of labour in various sectors of Kerala. Their problems need to be handled through coordination of various government agencies and other stakeholders. In respect of registration of migrant labourers and providing various entitlements and welfare schemes an appropriate legislation is required.

### 5.8.2 Tracking and Registration of Migrant labourers in Kerala

An inter coordination of various departments of Government of Kerala can lead to an effective system of tracking and registration of migrant labourers in Kerala. These are department of labour, department of home (through police stations) department of health ( through public health centers and hospitals), department of social welfare. State, local government institutions, trade unions, community based organizations and voluntary organizations should be involved in tracking migrant labourers in Kerala. Along with the tracking a system of registration needs to be started and hence it is required to formulate a policy at state level.

A migrant labour should be motivated for getting registered with Panchayat/ Municipality. A facilitation desk can be set up in Panchayat/ Municipality to track the inflow and outflow of labourer. Guidelines may be issued to contractors, residences and individual who employ the migrant labourers. Hospitals and police stations can also be involved in these activities. Even the help of service providers of mobile phones can be sought for the tracking of the migrant labourers. Similar activities have been reported from some parts of Kerala. Punalur Municipality had organized a medical camp for migrant labourers in May 2013 and issued health identity card to all participants. Similar activities can be carried out in all districts. The support from Civil Society Organizations can also be taken. Some employers do not register the names of migrant labourers with labour department to escape from liabilities of providing benefits to the employees and hence the Labour Department of Government of Kerala can take appropriate action. While registering the migrant laborers with Panchayats and Municipalities, they can collect information from various sources such as employers, banks, house owners, police stations, hospitals, Residence Welfare Associations and Voluntary Organizations.

At the local government level, a system of registration of migrant labourers should be introduced within the framework of a centralized registration system. Each Panchayat / Municipality office should be able to track the inflow and outflow of labourers. The migrant labourers should have an identity card for their safety. This will help the labourers as well as authorities in tracking the migrant labourers. A construction worker from Bengal fell down from the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of construction site and died on next day in Vattamkulam Gram Panchayat in Malapuram District In January 2014. Police and even the employer could not get the proper the details of the person. However, a card namely “HAMARAH” found in the pocket of the labourer was useful. The card was filled with relevant information including his home address in Jalpaiguri District of West Bengal, his blood group, etc., This indicates the use and significance of registration/identity details. HAMARAH (Humanitarians Approach in Migrants Ailment Rescue and Health) was issued by the District Medical Officer, Malappuram. The identification of new DML and issuing of cards can be a continuous activity. Apart from an identity proof, this card can help DML in accessing to

various facilities including medical facilities. Department of Health can introduce a system of registration at the level of primary health centres, community health centres, Taluk hospitals and Zilla hospitals.

### **5.8.3 Access to Rights and Entitlements for Migrant labourers in Kerala**

Migrant labourers should be provided access to their rights and entitlements in Kerala. This requires a change in policy of both state government of Kerala and Government of India. Migrant labourers should be able to get the benefits of public distribution system in Kerala. A portability of entitlements, including food supplies, insurance, medical benefits etc., could be initiated. Government of India can take appropriate measures for the implementation of portability of entitlements to migrant laborers. Portability of entitlements and benefits at place of migration is the need of the hour. It is found that migrant workers reside in Kerala for 8– 10 months in a year. They should be able to access ration from PDS shops in Kerala. This will bring a positive change in the nutritional level of these families and also have impact on their monthly budget, the savings of which can be diverted to other important segments like health and education. Government of India and state government of Kerala can work together for issuing 'Roaming Ration Card' scheme through which the migrant workers can avail food grains in Kerala. Their family members in the home villages should continue get the food grains. This scheme needs to be implemented on an urgent basis. Government of Kerala has a concern about the implications of providing subsidies and other benefits to migrant laborers. Hence the state is reluctant to give rights and entitlements to migrant laborers from different states. As there are 6-7 states get the benefits from migration to Kerala, Government of India may take certain steps to ensure the availability of welfare schemes in Kerala.

Panchayats and Municipalities can refer the matter for action if human rights of a migrant labourer are violated. The helpline number for the labourers should be introduced at PRI level. Local bodies do a mapping of habitations, to reach out to them with provision of crèche, ration card, school enrolment, immunization and other health services. A study on migrant workers in Kolkata has found that the major problem of migrant labourers is the lack of identity card such as voter ID and ration card, and hence "some structural changes in the protocol of such entitlements so that poor migrants can have access to these services" (Institute of Social Sciences and UNICEF, 2014)

### **5.8.4 Access to Basic Needs and Essential Services for Migrant Laborers**

*Housing:* Proper housing facilities, educational services and health care are now unavailable to migrant labourers in Kerala and hence there is an urgent need for introducing certain concrete measures. Government of Kerala with the support of Government of India can implement low cost special housing schemes for migrant labourers preferably through Public-Private partnerships. In a similar way, migrant labourers' hostels and night shelters may be constructed and managed by local government institutions.

Special housing schemes including hostels and night Shelters are quite essential for the floating migrant workers in Kerala.

*Public Health Care:* All the government hospitals ranging from primary health centre to Zilla hospitals should give a special care to migrant labourers. Medical insurance scheme may be introduced for them.

*Educational Services:* The rights of the children of these migrant laborers are heavily violated. Child abuse is very high. In the wake of Right to Education (RTE), child laborers below 14 years need schooling. We need to give lot of support services to these adolescent children including education, life-skill training and mental health counseling. It is important to promote measures for the education of the Migrant' children within the framework of Right to Education Act Social welfare department: has a major role to play for the implementation of the laws related to child right violations and atrocities of various natures.

*Education of Child Migrants:* It is important to note that there are three categories of child migrants. (1) child who migrate with family members. (2) child migrate independently without parents or guardians and (3) children who are born to migrants in Kerala. Apart from these three categories of migrant children, children of migrants who stay back in the home state are also get the impact of migration process. The state of Kerala needs to devote attention to the education of the three categories of children. Home states with the support of Government of India should deal with issues related to the education of children of migrants who stay back.

A suitable saving schemes/insurance schemes should be introduced for the labourers. Minimum wages and holidays should be ensured. Facilities of shelter, sanitation and food should be made available.

Labour department should help administration in bringing the disputes between migrant labourers and employers through amendment in their laws, which does not distinguish between the local labourers and migrants to reduce the exploitation of such labourers for wages and work timings.

### **5. 8. 5 Information Dissemination to Migrant Laborers**

Each of the migrant labourers in Kerala is well- connected with mobiles. They keep mobiles for connectivity with family members, relatives, contractors and employers. Through this technology latest information on related to government programmes, schemes, rights should reach them in local language. These can cover a wide range of information including minimum wages, registration system in Kerala, etc. Gram Panchayats can also play a role in making this segment of workers aware about their rights on wages, living conditions, insurance, etc. Implement minimum wages strictly or the different categories of the Migrant Labourers.



### **5.8.6 Surveillance System**

It is important to introduce an effective surveillance system in every Gram Panchayat/ Municipality to improve the living conditions of migrant labourers, address issues related to environment, cleanliness, health hazards, etc. Inspection to labour camps and worksites by the concerned authorities should be the part of the surveillance system to minimize various malpractices of employers.

### **5.8.7 Fund Allocation for the Welfare of Migrant Laborers and to deal with the migrant related problems of local community in Kerala**

State of Kerala gets significant benefits from the services of migrant labourers in Kerala. It is the responsibility of the State to manage the domestic migrant labourers effectively. A fund may be set up by Government of Kerala with the financial support of Government of India to be spent for the welfare of migrant labourers. In this context, Government of India should also earmark a fund for the welfare of migrant labourers in Kerala as well as in other Indian States.

## **5.9 Factors Influencing the Acceptability of Migrant Laborers in Kerala**

The presence of migrant labourers in Kerala is quite essential to fill the demand and supply gaps in the labour market. In this context, it is important to understand that the migrant labourers in Kerala do not take away the rights of local labourers or local community but help Kerala economy in filling the gap in demand and supply of labour. This understanding can reduce the tension in the local community and Kerala society has to accept its dependence on migrant workers. Unfortunately Kerala has not yet accepted the migrants as an integral part of the economy and most of the migrant labourers are looked down upon by the people in Kerala. Migrant labourers remain separated from the local community as there are many barriers to the integration of migrant labourers with the local community in Kerala. Language continues to be a major barrier as migrant laborers cannot communicate in Malayalam language. Reluctance of migrants in participating social functions and local festivals is another stumbling block. While migrant laborers require integration with the local community, apprehensions of Keralites about the possibility of criminals among migrant labourers and illegal migration of labourers from Bangladesh through West Bengal are causing a major hindrance. Even Government authorities in Kerala have expressed various apprehensions about the increased inflow of migrants with criminal background and citizenship of Bangladesh. The possibility of inflow of criminals can be addressed through proper verification system and registration. Barriers need to be removed by implementing concrete measures discussed in this chapter which in turn will improve the acceptability of migrant labourers in Kerala.

## 5.10 A Model of an Institutional Mechanism

The experience of domestic migrant labourers calls for a supportive policy framework. A multi- pronged strategy with the involvement of national, state and local governments supported by community based organizations is urgently required to address vexed problems of migrant laborers in Kerala. Many of their issues largely need policy solution both at national and state level. The States through its various departments, especially labour, social welfare, health and home have to carry out certain concrete actions. Each State has to involve its panchayats, municipalities and municipal corporations in dealing with various aspects of issues of migration. All India migrant policy may be formulated by both state and central governments. In this context, state of Kerala can take a lead. A model of an institutional mechanism to address issues of domestic migrant labourers specifying the role of state governments, Government of India and community is presented in the following Table 5:1 and Table 5:2

**Table 5:1**  
**Model of an Institutional Mechanism in Kerala**

Stakeholders	Purpose of the Activity	Strategies/Activities	Expected Outcomes
Local Government Institutions (Panchayats & Municipalities), Government of Kerala	Register the names with all the relevant information of all the migrant labourers using a centralized online registration system linking all the panchayats and municipalities in the State of Kerala.	Tracking and registration of Migrant labourers in Kerala. Issues identity card to each DML. Migrant Labourers have a tendency to move within the state and hence a centralized online system can be introduced using a software connecting all panchayats and municipalities.	Online centralized registration system supported by software. A database of DML is created and updated.

Trade Unions, Residence Welfare Associations, Association of panchayats and municipalities, service providers of mobile phones and voluntary organizations in Kerala .	Tracking of the migrant labourers in Kerala.	Provide support to tracking and registration of migrant labourers in Kerala. A partnership approach can be a good strategy.	Online centralized registration system supported by software. A database of DML is created and updated.
Department of Labour, Government of Kerala	Facilitation to registration process by the labour offices. Ensure the Payment of minimum wages to migrant labourers. Coverage of Insurance and other welfare schemes Monitoring the quality standards of housing facilities of migrant labourers.	In addition to provide support to tracking and registration of migrant labourers in Kerala, the department of labour should take follow - up actions in ensuring welfare of migrant labourers.	Labour welfare measures including minimum wages and reduction of vulnerabilities of migrant labourers are implemented. Effective implementation of labour laws and focused welfare policies.
Department of Home, Government of Kerala	Facilitation to registration process by police stations. Verification of migrant labourers in Kerala with the help of employers, panchayats and municipalities.	Tracking of illegal migrants and steps for prevention of crimes. Support to registration of Migrant labourers in Kerala	Reduction in crime committed by DML. Flow of illegal migrant labourers is prevented.
Department of Health, Government of Kerala	Facilitation to registration process by Health Centers and Government Hospitals. Organizing health	With the cooperation of Panchayats and municipalities health camps may be organized once in six months. Health cards with all the	Improvement of health care of migrant labourers in particular and public health care in general.DML who carry communicable

	<p>camps for migrant labourers and issue health cards.</p> <p>Provide health care to migrant labourers.</p>	<p>identification details and health related information may be issued to all the migrant labourers.</p>	<p>diseases that were eradicated from Kerala are identified and sent back to home states.</p>
Department of Education, Government of Kerala	Enrolment of migrant children in schools	<p>Under the framework of RTE Act, all the migrant children may be enrolled.</p> <p>Local government authorities may be involved.</p>	<p>Proper education is provided to children and child labour is prevented in Kerala. .</p>
Department of Food and Civil Supplies , Government of Kerala	Issuing of Roaming Ration Cards to avail subsidized food items.	<p>In the context of food security bill, appropriate measures can be taken to ensure the availability of subsidized food and related items to all migrant labourers in Kerala.</p>	<p>Portability of benefits is in place. Portability of food entitlements to all DML is ensured.</p>
Department of Social Welfare, Government of Kerala	Provide the benefits of various social welfare schemes to migrant labourers.	<p>Carry out activities to disseminate information about various welfare schemes to migrant labourers.</p>	<p>Portability of welfare measures for all DML is ensured.</p>
Government of Kerala	Enactment of a viable law by Kerala to address vulnerabilities of migrant labourers and to deal with the migrant-related problems of local	<p>Prepare a draft bill in consultation with all the stakeholders. Pass the bill in the legislative assembly</p>	<p>A legal framework is created to address all relevant problems of migrant laborers who contribute significantly to the growth of Kerala's economy as an important base for supply of labour can be</p>

	community in Kerala		handled through coordination of various government agencies and other stakeholders.
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The Table 5.2 indicates the role of Government of India as well as government of each home state of domestic migrant labourers in Kerala in the model institutional mechanism.

**Table 5:2**

**Role of Government of India and Home States in the Model Institutional Mechanism in Kerala**

<b>Stakeholders : India</b>	<b>Purpose of the Activity</b>	<b>Strategies/Activities</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>
Ministry of Labor, Government of India	Provisioning of portability of various entitlements and benefits to migrant labourers in host states.  Provisioning of support to family members of migrant labourers in states of origin of migrant labourers in addressing their basic needs.	Coordinate with other relevant Ministries of Government of India to provide access to Rights and Entitlements for Migrant labourers in Kerala  Coordinate with state governments of various home states to provide access to rights and entitlements for migrant labourers in Kerala/ other States.  Financial support from the central government may be given for welfare of domestic migrant labourers.	Portability of basic entitlement is ensured.  Financial support from the central government is made available for welfare of domestic migrant labourers.
<b>Stakeholders : States of</b>	<b>Purpose of the</b>	<b>Strategies/Activities</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>

Origin of migrant labourers	Activity		
<p>Each State government of Origin of migrant labourers (Home States of migrant labourers)</p>	<p>Track the laborers migrating to other Indian States and facilitate migration of laborers to other states.</p> <p>Trade Unions, Residence Welfare Associations, Panchayats and Municipalities and Voluntary Organizations may be involved.</p> <p>Facilitate the portability of various entitlements and benefits including food at subsidized rates .</p> <p>Information sharing between home states and Kerala. Home States may take initiatives to access/ link/support data base of Kerala.</p> <p>Helpline for out migrants may be set up</p>	<p>Provide relevant information and guidance to Migrant labourers in Kerala with the help of, Panchayats and municipalities and voluntary organization. This will enable them in addressing various problems in host states.</p> <p>Coordinate with/ negotiate with Government of India</p>	<p>A database on out-migrant laborers from the respective state is created</p> <p>A database on out-migrant laborers from the respective state is updated.</p> <p>Continuous facilitations and support is provided to out migrant laborers.</p>

In nutshell, government of Kerala has initiated various welfare measures for domestic migrant labourers and a considerable provision is earmarked in the budget proposals. However, illiteracy, language problem and communication gap prevent them in availing these measures. There is a need for organizing awareness programmes, medical camps and introducing the proper registration system. The model of an institutional mechanism discussed in this chapter can be introduced in Kerala to address various problems of domestic migrant labourers. This model can be replicated in other Indian States which attracts domestic migrant labourers. The preceding discussion about the model indicates a broad outline of policy to be adopted over the medium term. The prime mover of recommended policy should be a promotion of flow of domestic migrant labourers in India which in turn can result in the development of both various home and host States.

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