

**IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON KERALA'S
ECONOMY AND SOCIETY**

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ABSTRACT

This research is first of its kind for Kerala, being the first migration study that covers the entire state and encompasses both measurement as well as analysis of the various types and facets of migration. Migration has been the single-most dynamic factor in the otherwise dreary development scenario of Kerala in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Kerala is approaching the end of the millennium with a little cheer in many people's homes, a major contributing factor for which has been migration. Migration has contributed more to poverty alleviation in Kerala than any other factor, including agrarian reforms, trade union activities and social welfare legislation.

The study shows that nearly 1.5 million Keralites now live outside India. They send home more than Rs.4,000 million a year by way of remittances. Three-quarters of a million former emigrants have come back. They live mostly on savings, work experience, and skills brought with them from abroad. More than a million families depend on internal migrants' earnings for subsistence, children's education and other economic requirements. Whereas the educationally backward Muslims from the Thrissur-Malappuram region provide the backbone of emigration, it is the educationally forward Ezhawas, Nairs and Syrian Christians from the former Travancore-Cochin State who form the core of internal migration. The paper also analyses the determinants and consequences of internal and external migration. It offers suggestions for policy formulation for the optimum utilization of remittances sent home by the emigrants and the expertise brought back by the return migrants.

Migration in Kerala began with demographic expansion, but it won't end with demographic contraction. Kerala has still time to develop itself into an internally self-sustaining economy. The prevailing cultural milieu of Kerala in which its people believe that anything can be achieved through agitation and any rule can be circumvented with proper political connections, must change and be replaced by a liberalised open economy with strict and definite rules of the game.

JEL Classification: J21, J23

I. Introduction

Migration from Kerala to the other states in India and to countries outside has now become so rampant that its impact is felt in every aspect of life in the State. This is a relatively recent development, having peaked up during the past quarter of a century. Kerala had remained till about the 1940s basically a non-migrating population.

After World War II and with the Indian Independence in 1947, migration became a way of life to many of the educated youths of the State. At first, migration was almost entirely confined to within India, but in more recent times migration to countries outside India has grown rapidly. At present emigration has become all-pervasive in the economic and social life in the State and has outpaced migration within India. Almost all families in Kerala are affected by migration to the Gulf region in one way or another. Migration is affecting every facet of life in Kerala, economic, social, demographic, political and even religious. With such rampant impact, one should have expected that there would be a large number of studies measuring the extent of emigration and assessing its impact on life in the State. Yet, the situation is very different. There are, of course, a number of localised studies, but none on the impact of migration at the state level. They have collected useful information and

produced good hypotheses, but they have become mostly out of date. It was in that context, that this study on the consequences of migration on Kerala society is undertaken.

The overall objective of the study is to analyse its characteristics and to examine its consequences on the society and economy of the State. It is hoped that such an analysis would help formulation of policies for development and solution of problems caused by the phenomenon.

The principal source of data for the study was a large-scale sample survey, conducted during March-December, 1998, of 10,000 households selected from 200 Panchayats/Municipal wards, (at the rate of 50 households per Panchayat/Municipal ward), comprising all the districts and all the taluks of the State. This summary based on the analysis of data collected from 10,000 households is given in seven parts: in the first part, an attempt is made to provide the major dimensions of migration, the number of emigrants and returned emigrants and the number of out-migrants and returned out-migrants. This section fills in a major gap in the information on the migration situation in the State by providing scientifically estimated number of migrants from Kerala and back to the State. This is perhaps the first time a good estimate of the number of return emigrants to Kerala from the Gulf countries is provided.

The second part provides the major socio-economic (eg: education, occupation, community) and demographic (eg: age, sex, marital status) characteristics of the migrants.

Parts three and four present the discussion on the consequences and determinants of migration. Consequences are focussed on household remittances, both in cash and in kind, and their disposition, by districts, according to community and educational status of migrants and their households. The significance of remittances to the economy of Kerala

is brought out through comparisons with State SDP and budgetary transfers received from the Central Government. The impact of remittances on housing and housing quality as well as on the acquisition of sophisticated household gadgets and other durables and on educational development and occupational mobility, is also examined.

The section on determinants gives not only an analysis of the factors associated with migration, but also a framework for discussion of the determinants of migration.

The overview is concluded with some preliminary thoughts on the overall policy relevance of the study.

II. Migration Situation in Kerala in 1998

Migrants fall into four categories:

emigrants (emi) or usual residents of a household who had migrated out of Kerala and were living outside India in 1998

return emigrants (rem) or usual members of a household who had returned to Kerala after living outside India for a year or more; or for a lesser period, if the stay outside was for the purpose of studies or looking for a job,

out-migrants (omi) or usual residents of a household who migrated out of Kerala and were living outside Kerala but within India in 1998, and,

return out-migrants (rom) or usual members of a household who had returned to Kerala after living outside Kerala but within India for a year or more; or for a lesser period, if the stay was for the purpose of studies or looking for a job.

The study enumerated all these four types. The first two are termed external migrants and the last two, internal migrants.

Migration Prevalence: An overall measure of migration is provided by Migration Prevalence Rate (MPR) which is defined as the ratio of the sum of the four types of migrants in an area (e.g. district) or social group (e.g. Muslims) to the number of households in the area or social group.

At the State level, there were altogether 3.75 million migrants. With an estimated 6.35 million households in 1998, the MPR is 60 per cent. This means that corresponding to every 100 households in 1998, there were 60 migrants. Some households had more than one migrant, and, therefore, the figure of 60 per cent does not imply that 60 per cent of the households had a migrant in 1998. That figure is measured by Household Migration Rate (HMR) which comes to only about 40 per cent.

Out of the 3.75 million migrants, 2.05 million were those residing outside Kerala (32 per 100 households) and the balance 1.70 million were persons who had come back (27 per 100 households). Similarly, 2.10 million were external migrants (33 per 100 household) and the balance were internal migrants (26 per 100 households)

International Migration : Until the 1970s, international migration from Kerala was relevant for the Kerala society, not very much for its statistical significance, but only for its demonstration effect as a means for upward social mobility, especially for the middle class. A small number of emigrants had gone to South-East Asian countries, Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, Singapore, etc, and their emigration had enabled their families to improve their socio-economic status as adjudged by land ownership, good housing and, better education for children. The positive

gains of these pioneers constituted a major factor contributing to the acceleration of emigration from the State to the other regions of the World when opportunities emerged. Large-scale emigration from the State began only in the 1970s.

Emigrants : According to this study, the best estimate of the number of emigrants from Kerala in the second half of 1998 was 1.36 millions.

Our estimate is slightly lower than what others have given as the number of emigrants. The Economic Review, 1998 of the State Planning Board of Kerala gives the number of emigrants at about 1.6 million (2) Prakash puts the figure at 1.4 million for 1997 (4). Though they fall in the plausible range, these estimates are based on untested methodology.

Our estimate of the number of emigrants included only those who have roots in Kerala. It is not of the number of Malayalees abroad but only of the number of persons who moved out from an existing household in Kerala after 1980. If a Malayalee, after living in Bombay for several decades had moved to a foreign country (Dubai, for example) he/she would be included in our estimate if and only if he/she has a family in Kerala to report about his/her emigration. Similarly, a child born abroad to a Malayalee is not an emigrant in our calculations. We maintain that for an analysis of the consequence of migration on the economy of Kerala, we should consider as emigrants only those who have roots in the State.

As stated earlier, the estimate given in this study is based on primary data collected from a sample of 10,000 households from all the taluks in the State. The estimate of the number of emigrants at the state level (1.36 million) has a tolerance limit (95 per cent standard error) of 0.19 million (plus or minus). Thus, we concluded that in the second half of 1998, the number of emigrants from Kerala was somewhere between 1.55 million and 1.17 million.

Emigration from Kerala has accelerated in recent years, the number progressively increasing from year to year. Between 1988/92 and 1993/97 the number of emigrants increased by 120 per cent. The increasing trend shown by the data from this study is fully supported by external sources such as the Ministry of Labour, Government of India. There could, however, come a break in the upward trend for several reasons; the stock of young workers in Kerala is likely to decrease; the more technically qualified workers from other South Asian and South-East Asian countries would give stiff competition to Kerala workers; the Gulf countries might close the doors to expatriate workers for giving jobs to their citizens; wage rates in the Gulf region may become unattractive; and so on.

Arab countries of the Middle East were the destination of 95 per cent of the emigrants with Saudi Arabia alone accounting for nearly 40 per cent of the total. Outside the Arab world, the principal destination of Kerala emigrants was the United States of America, which accounted for 2.2 per cent of the total.

Urban-Rural differences with respect to the origin of the emigrants were marginal. However, there are very clear differentials as far as the origin of the emigrants is concerned.

The principal place of origin of emigrants from Kerala is the Malappuram-Thrissur area. A secondary centre is the Thiruvananthapuram district. The largest number of emigrants was from Malappuram - about 297 thousand or more than a fifth of the total. Thiruvananthapuram was next in the order, but with only 131 thousand or 10 per cent of the total. Thrissur, Palakkad, Kozhikode, Kollam and Ernakulam had nearly 100 thousand each. The smallest number was from the hilly districts of Wyanad and Idukki, with 4.6 thousand and 7.4 thousand respectively.

In terms of emigrants per 100 households, Malappuram was in the lead with a rate of 49; Pathanamthitta came second with a rate of 33 . Thrissur, Kozhikode and Palakkad districts each had higher-than-average migration rates underscoring the dominant place this region occupies in the emigration map of Kerala.

Emigration is a costly venture. An average emigrant from Kerala spent Rs 44 thousand for going abroad. Money was needed to buy tickets, for visa fees, and for agent's commission. In some cases, there was also a cost arising from cheating. A complete breakdown of this total is not possible, as not all emigrants have incurred all the expenses. Among those who have incurred the various expenses, the average cost of the ticket was Rs 13 thousand, the visa fee was Rs 32 thousand, and the agents' commission was Rs 14 thousand. Those who were defrauded by the cheats, the average loss came to Rs 22 thousand.

About 27 per cent of the emigrants raised the funds for meeting emigration costs from family savings, 50 per cent borrowed from relatives, 60 per cent took institutional loans and 40 per cent sold gold ornaments and jewellery. Only a small minority sold land . Most emigrants used more than one source.

Return Emigrants : There hardly exists any reliable estimate of the number of return emigrants. Yet, the problems of rehabilitation and reabsorption of the return migrants are considered serious problems for the state economy and the families of the persons concerned. We consider the information thrown up by this study on return emigrants as one of its unique contributions.

The number of return emigrants was lower than the number of emigrants, and it had remained much smaller in the past. In 1998, there were 739 thousand return emigrants, about 623 thousand (46 per cent)

less than the number of emigrants. About one-eighth of the households in Kerala had a return emigrant each.

The geographic distribution of the return emigrants correlates with that of the emigrants, with only slight variations. The largest number of return emigrants were in Malappuram (124 thousand persons which constituted 17 per cent of the total for the State as whole or 21 return emigrants per 100 households in the district). The other major centres of location of the return emigrants were Thiruvananthapuram (119 thousand return emigrants or 16 per cent of the total for the State or 18 per 100 households in the district), and Thrissur (117 thousand persons, accounting for 16 per cent of the total or 19 per 100 household).

Comparison of the district of origin of the emigrants and of the district of resettlement of the return emigrants indicated that, on an average, the return emigrants tend to live in places south of the place from where they had emigrated. The Centre of Location (COL) of the return emigrants was south of the COL of the emigrants by the width of a district or by the width of four taluks.

Internal Migration

Until very recently, Kerala was known more for its internal (within India) migration than for its external migration. There are two distinct phases (or turn around) in the historical trend in the migration experience of Kerala. The first turn around occurred in the 1940s when Kerala became closely integrated with the other states of India. It started with World War II and the Indian Independence in 1947. Until then, Kerala was a net in-migration state; more persons from neighbouring states came to Kerala than the number of persons who moved to these states. After the integration, for the first time, Kerala became a net out-migration state. The number of persons from Kerala moving to Madras, Bombay,

Calcutta, Delhi and other metropolitan centres exceeded the number who came to Kerala from other states.

The second turn around took place in the 1970s, when Kerala became a major emigration state. Until then, international migration from Kerala was relatively small, at least compared to internal migration. The relative position of emigrants and out-migrants changed drastically after the oil boom of the 1970s. In the 1981-91 decade, net external migration (net emigration) was about 555 thousand persons compared with a net internal migration (net out-migration) of 189 thousand persons. Thus, Kerala's loss of population through external migration was almost three times the loss due to internal migration.

The first transition was a change from net in-migration to net out-migration. The second transition was a change from a predominance of out-migration to a predominance of emigration. Some of the out-migrants themselves became emigrants, moving to the country of destination directly from their state of domicile in India.

Out-Migration : Out of a total of 3.75 million thousand migrants in 1998, 1.65 million were internal migrants (691 thousand out-migrants and 959 thousand return out-migrants). Thus, unlike external migration, the number of return out-migrants exceeded the number of out-migrants. The difference was 267 thousand or 39 per cent of the out-migrants. The number of out-migrants was only 51 per cent of the number of emigrants. This is a significant difference, but not the only one between the two. District of origin of the migrants and their characteristics are also significantly different.

The major place of origin of out-migration is central Travancore: Alappuzha (90 thousand) and Pathanamthitta (86 thousand) districts, each accounting for about 13 per cent of the total. As in the case of

emigration, there is a secondary location, which, in this case is Thrissur district (86 thousand or 14 per cent of the total). On the whole, most of the internal migrants originated from the former Travancore and Cochin States.

In terms of out-migrants per 100 households, Pathanamthitta district (29 out-migrants per 100 households) has a marked lead over its nearest rival Kasaragod district (22 out migrants per 100 households). Six districts --Pathanamthitta, Kasaragod, Alappuzha, Palakkad, Thrissur, and Kollam --have out-migration rates above the state average of 10.9. Malappuram, which was the leading district for emigration has one of the lowest ranks with respect to out-migration rate (only 3.9).

The number of return out-migrants (959 thousand) was higher by 39 per cent than the number of out-migrants. Thrissur district had the largest number of return out-migrants (193 thousand). It was followed by Alappuzha (160 thousand) and Palakkad (118 thousand). In terms of return out-migrants per 100 households, Alappuzha is ahead of all others. The other leading districts are Thrissur, Palakkad and Pathanamthitta.

In general, the return out-migrants have settled down in the same district from which they had moved out in the first place. The Centre of Location of return out-migrants was more or less the same as the COL of out-migrants, the overall change was a mere -0.1 of the length of a district. If the analysis is done community-wise, a significant movement southwards is noticeable among Muslims (by the width of 1.91 districts) and a significant northward movement in the case of Scheduled Castes (by the width 1.03 districts)

III. Migration Differentials and Selectivity

The characteristics of external migrants often differ from those of internal migrants and both differ from those of non-migrants. These

differences provide several clues to the determinants and consequences of migration.

Characteristics are of two types. Those that do not change with migration such as sex, birth year (age), community, etc. Analyses of these fixed characteristics often throw considerable light on the factors associated with migration leading to a better understanding of determinants of migration. Then there are changing personal characteristics such as occupation, educational level, marital status, and changing household characteristics such as quality of houses and possession of durable consumer goods. Analyses of the changing characteristics are relevant for assessment of the consequences of migration.

Sex, Age, Marital Status : In India, males outnumber females in most migration streams. This is true of Kerala migration also, internal and external migration, in-migration and out-migration.

Census data, which are more comprehensive in analyzing gender issues in inter-state migration, support the conclusion that there is an excess of males among internal migrants affecting Kerala. However, the trends are undisputedly in favour of women. This is true not only among internal migrants but also among external migrants. A very significant aspect of the turn around in migration in the 1980s has been the increasing trend in the proportion of females among external migrants. Between the two decades 1971-81 and 1981-91, male inter-census migration had decreased by 38 thousand while female inter-census migration had decreased by only 22 thousand. During the same period, male external migration had increased by 67 thousand while female external migration increased by 264 thousand.

The Kerala Migration Study supports the general understanding of the predominance of males in all the migration streams. The emigrants

from Kerala comprised only 9.3 per cent of females (about 127 thousand) and the balance, 1,235 thousand were males. Among the out-migrants the proportion of females was much higher (24.1 per cent). There has also been considerable increase in the proportion of females among recent out-migrants (18.8 per cent among out-migrants who moved out before 1991 and 27.3 per cent among those who moved out after 1990). However, there was no corresponding increase among emigrants.

Sex composition of emigrants and out-migrants varied considerably by community. The proportion of females was very small among Muslims (4.7 per cent among emigrants and only 3.0 per cent among out-migrants). The highest proportion was among Christians, over 20 per cent among emigrants and 38 per cent among out-migrants.

In general, educational level is positively associated with the proportion of females among the migrants; the higher the educational attainment of a migrant group, the higher is the proportion of females.

Most migrants were in the young age groups of 15-34 years at the time of migration (84 per cent of out-migrants and 81 per cent of the emigrants). The average age of an emigrant was 27 years and the average age of a return emigrant was 34 years. One possible inference from these figures is that a Kerala emigrant returns home after a seven-year stay abroad. In this respect, there is not much difference between an internal migrant and an external migrant, a male migrant and a female migrant. On an average all of them return home after seven years of residence outside Kerala.

Emigrants and out-migrants differ much with respect to their marital status composition. While about 50 per cent of the emigrant males and three-fourths of the emigrant females were married at the time of emigration, only 20 per cent of the out-migrant males and only

50 per cent of out-migrant females were married at the time of out-emigration. One surprising aspect of the marital status composition of the out-migrants was the very high proportion of separated females (9.4 per cent) among them. Migration seems to be a way to deal with the marital problems of the females. Similarly, the proportion of the widowed was relatively high among both the return emigrants (7.4 per cent) and return out-migrants (8.1 per cent). The death of the spouse seems to be an important factor in the return of female migrants, from within India and from out-side.

Education : Migration is usually selective of persons with higher education, the rate of migration being higher among persons with higher educational level. Kerala migrants follow, in general, this pattern. About 40 per cent of the emigrants and 59 per cent of the out-migrants had a secondary school certificate or a degree compared with only 23 per cent among the general population. The degree of educational selectivity is much higher among internal migrants than among external migrants. The emigrants included about 16 per cent who have just primary education or less, but among the out-migrants, only 9 per cent were in this educational category.

A measure of migration differential is the sum of the positive (or negative) differences between the per centage distribution of migrants by educational level and the per centage distribution by educational level of the general population. According to this measure, the educational differentials between the emigrants and the general population was 25.5 per cent and the educational differential of the out-migrants was considerably larger, 35.9 per cent. Internal migrants from Kerala are much better educated than external migrants.

There are significant community-wise differences with respect to educational differentials of the migrants. The proportion of persons with

a secondary school certificate is higher among migrants in all communities; but that is not the case of the proportion of persons with degree. Among Scheduled Castes and Muslims, the proportion of degree holders was lower among out-migrants than among the general population. There are also considerable differences in the "less than secondary" category.

Differences are observed between persons who move out of Kerala and those who return in terms of educational status. The difference is particularly large among internal migrants, about 18 per centage points (compared with 10 per centage points among emigrants). It seems that poor educational attainment is one of the factors for the early return of out-migrants. Illiterate and poorly educated out-migrants could not compete with the local population or other in-migrants in the destinations as much as the better-educated migrants could; therefore, they tend to return earlier than the others did.

One noteworthy feature of the migrants from Kerala, (emigrants and out-migrants), is that only a minority of them are technically qualified. Two-thirds had no technical knowledge at all; one-eighth had some degree of technical knowledge, but without any formal training. This leaves just 20 per cent with some technical training. The out-migrants have better general education, but are not very much different from emigrants as far as technical education is concerned. Women, who are fewer among the migrants, have better technical education.

In the international competition for jobs, Kerala emigrants stand to lose because of their poor technical competence.

Occupation : People in the working age migrate either to secure a job or to move on to a higher (or better-paid) job. In either case, the occupations of migrants are likely to be different from those of non-migrants and occupations before migration are likely to be different from

those after migration. The migration rates vary considerably from one occupation to another. Differentials with respect to occupation are significant.

The overall emigration rate among persons 15 years and above was 5.4 per cent but that among the unemployed was as high as 26.4 per cent (4.9 times). Another group, which had a high emigration rate, was persons working in the private sector, 20.6 per cent, in which wages were not presumably very high. A third group with high propensity to emigrate was labourers in non-agriculture. Emigration rate among them was 2.3 times that of the general population. These three groups were positively selected among the migrants. The high status occupations such as those in government and semi-government sectors were negatively selected.

Occupational differentials among the out-migrants are not very much different from those of the emigrants. The unemployed, the unpaid family workers, students and persons working in the private sector were positively selected and those high in status jobs were negatively selected.

There are inter-community differences in the degree of occupational selectivity. For example, migration rate among the unemployed varied from 68 per cent among Muslims to 34 per cent among Syrian Christians and to 1.5 per cent among the Scheduled Castes. The average for all communities is 14.8 per cent. Similarly, among those who were working in the private sector the emigration rate varied from 51 per cent among Syrian Christians to 33 per cent among Muslims and to 4 per cent among Scheduled Castes (the overall average was 14.7 per cent)

The pattern among the out-migrants was quite similar. Among the unemployed the average out-migration rate for all communities was 13 per cent, but the rate among Syrian Christians was 67 per cent.

Community: Among the factors associated with migration, community status is one of the most powerful. If one is a Muslim, one's chance of emigration is 2.2(49 per cent) times the general average (22 per cent). On the other hand, his chance of out-migration (6.3 per cent) is only 0.55 times the general average (11.5 per cent). The chance of Syrian Christians to emigrate is just about the general average, but their chance for out-migration is 1.9 times the general average (22.1 per cent). The lowest probability for migration, emigration as well as out-migration, was among the Scheduled Castes (15 per cent of the general average for emigration and 50 per cent for out-migration)

Viewed from another angle, more than one-half the number of emigrants were Muslims and 13 per cent Ezhawas, 12 per cent Syrian Christians, 8 per cent Latin Christians, and 8 per cent Nairs. The Scheduled Castes constituted only 1.4 per cent.

No such skewed distribution is seen among out-migrants. Ezhawas constituted 23 per cent; Nairs and Syrian Christians were about 20 per cent each; and Latin Christians and Muslims accounted for about 12 per cent each. Scheduled Castes came to only about 5 per cent.

The distribution of migrants by community varies considerably across districts. In Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam the dominant emigrant groups are Ezhawas (34 per cent) and Muslims (23 per cent). Syrian Christians are the major emigrant group in Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam and Idukki. Muslims are the dominant emigrant group in all the northern districts beyond Ernakulam. There is no district in the State in which the number of emigrants from the Nair community is the highest.

In the case of out-migration, Syrian Christians have a dominant position in Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Idukki, Ernakulam,

and Wayanad. Nairs out-number all others in Thiruvanthapuram, Kollam and Kozhikode. In Thrissur, it is Latin Christians who dominate the out-migration scene. Muslims are a majority among the out migrants only in Malappuram and Kasaragod.

The majority of the Scheduled caste emigrants originated from Thiruvanthapuram (36 per cent of the total number of emigrants of these castes for the state as a whole); the Nair emigrants came from Palakkad (20 per cent); the Ezhava emigrants from Thiruvananthapuram (28 per cent); Syrian Christian emigrants from Pathanamthitta (47 per cent); Latin Christians emigrants from Thrissur (26) and Muslim emigrants from Malappuram (35 per cent). The districts of predominance of the out-migrants are different. Kollam is the major area of origin of Scheduled castes and Nair out-migrants; correspondingly, Alappuzha is the major area of origin of Ezhava out-migrants (20 per cent), Pathanamthitta for Syrian Christians (37 per cent), Ernakulam for Latin Christians (39 per cent) and Kasaragod for Muslims (42 per cent).

IV. Consequences of Migration

One of the major objectives of this study is the analysis of the consequences of migration on Kerala's economy and society. This Working Paper deals with some of the consequences, but not all. Others will be dealt with in the second working paper. Aspects included in the analysis here include consequences on financial resources, human resources, housing and housing quality and ownership of household consumer durables.

Most of the consequences, especially those taking place in the households of migrants, are brought about through remittances and their utilisation. Socio-economic and demographic factors lead to emigration and out-migration; emigration and out-migration lead, in turn to

remittances; remittances cause social and economic changes; and these changes in the next move, become factors promoting migration. The process goes on in cycles. Remittance, in this sense, is an intermediate determinant of the consequences.

Remittances from abroad.: This study collected information on remittances- in cash and in kind - received by households through private or through public channels such as banks. It did not include remittances made to institutions . The remittances which households receive need not be exclusively from members of the household who are away; they could as well contain a part, received from others, such as friends or relatives.

Households are likely to under-report remittances, willingly or otherwise. Consequently, the remittances reported in the study should be taken as a lower limit.

Not all households which had emigrants abroad reported having received remittances. Altogether only 18 per cent of all sample households (or 80 per cent of the households with emigrants) reported to have received remittances during 1998.

An estimate of the total cash remittances received by Kerala households during a 12- month period in 1998 was Rs 35,304 million.

The average remittance was about Rs 25 thousand per emigrant, (Rs 5,500 per household and Rs 1,105 per capita). Cash remittances constituted about 9.3 per cent of the State Domestic Product. If the remittances were added to the SDP, the per capita SDP would have been Rs 13,041 instead of the actual Rs 11,936. The annual remittances received by the Kerala households were 2.55 times higher than what Kerala Government received from the Central Government as budget support.

Besides cash, households received several items in kind - clothing, ornaments and jewellery, electric and electronic gadgets; the total value of goods received was Rs 5,413 million. Thus, total remittances (cash plus goods) came to Rs. 40,717 million or 10.7 per cent of SDP.

Inter-community variations in total remittances show the same pattern as inter- community differentials in the number of emigrants. Malappuram received 17 per cent of the total remittances. Thrissur was next with 14 per cent and Ernakulam stood third with 13 per cent. The southern districts, Thiruvananthapuram to Alappuzha, received remittances in the range of 6-10 per cent.

Muslims received 47 per cent of the total remittances. Ezhawas and Syrian Christians each had received about 13 per cent . Latin Christians received 11 per cent and Nairs about 9 per cent. However, it was not Muslim households which received the highest per emigrant remittances. An average Latin Christian emigrant sent back Rs 33 thousand per year and an average Syrian Christian emigrant Rs 27 thousand. In contrast, the average remittance per Muslim emigrant was Rs 24 thousand only.

Remittances per emigrant varied according to educational levels. The remittances of an average degree holding emigrant was Rs 37 thousand while that of an illiterate emigrant was Rs 20 thousand. The inter-community differences in remittances per emigrant were mostly due to differences in educational level.

The major end use of remittances is reported to be household consumption; 86 per cent of the households mentioned living expenses as the main expenditure item met out of remittances. The other important uses were education (36 per cent), repayment of debt (27 per cent), construction and repairs of buildings (11per cent), and bank deposits (8 per cent).

Migration and Housing : One of the priority items of disposition of an emigrant's savings was improvement of the quality of his housing.

The consequences of migration on housing are examined in two ways. First the value of the house of migrants is compared with that of non-migrants. An index of the value of the house of a typical emigrant was 7.05 compared with an index of 6.44 of a return emigrant, 5.02 of an out-migrant, 4.86 of a return out-migrant and 4.30 of a non-migrant. The index thus, increases steadily from non-migrants through out-migrants to emigrants.

A second measure is the quality of the house as assessed by the investigators. Taking as an index of the quality of housing, the proportion of houses which are characterized as "luxurious" or "very good", it is found that, the index was 24.9 for emigrants, 24.4 for return emigrants 15.9 for return out-migrants, 13.9 among out-migrants, and 10.6 for non-migrants. Similarly, among the emigrants, the quality index was 38.7 among those who emigrated prior to 1991, 24.0 among those who emigrated between 1991 and 1995, and only 18.6 among those who emigrated after 1995. Thus, the quality of houses is better for those who have been away for longer periods. The period of emigration is thus positively associated with the quality of housing.

A similar pattern of relationship is observed among out-migrants too.

A three-way analysis of variance in which the index of housing quality was the dependent variable, and community, and migration status were the independent variables, indicated that migration status has a strong statistically significant relationship with the quality of housing. The effect of migration status on housing quality was independent of the places of origin of the migrants or their community.

Household Amenities: Nearly three-fourths of all the houses in Kerala are electrified. At the same time, among the emigrants and return-emigrants, the corresponding per centage is 87. Among the non-migrant households, however, the proportion is low- only 66 per cent. The houses of internal migrants have a slightly lower level than those of emigrants; but the levels are higher than those of non-migrants' households.

A higher proportion of houses of migrant households have flush-out toilets than non-migrant households have. The difference is maintained in all the communities.

In Kerala, about 19 per cent of the households use LPG for cooking, varying from 39 per cent among Syrian Christians to only 2.7 per cent among Scheduled Castes. Among all the communities taken together, non-migrants which use LPG is lower than the proportion of households of migrants. Emigrants' households are higher in proportion than households of out-migrants. There is, however, not much of a difference between households of emigrants and of return emigrants in this respect. The highest proportion of households using LPG for cooking was among emigrants belonging to the Syrian Christian community (73 per cent).

Possession of Consumer Durables: Conspicuous consumption is a hallmark of an emigrant, especially a Kerala emigrant. Emigrants become accustomed to the use of many new durable consumer goods while abroad. Since many of these goods used to be unavailable locally they brought them on return home. Most of these goods are now locally available, and the higher purchasing power of migrant households enables them to acquire these goods more frequently and effortlessly than non-migrants could.

Possession of 23 different household consumer durables (HCDs) was analysed to see where the migrant households stand vis -a-vis non-

migrant households. For easy comparison, an index of the possession of HCDs was calculated for each migrant group and for the emigrants by duration of emigration (the index could vary between 0 and 100). The index was 32 for emigrants and return emigrants, 27 for return out-migrants and 22 for out-migrants. For the non-migrant household, the index was only 15. The comparison indicates that migration has a positive influence on ownership of consumer durables. International migrants have a higher propensity to acquire HCDs than internal migrants; and internal migrant households have a higher propensity than non-migrant households.

About 54 per cent of the emigrant households, as against 34 per cent of non-migrant households, had a television set each. About 40 per cent of the emigrant households owned refrigerators, but only 13 per cent of the non-migrant households did.

Analysis of the per centage of households possessing specific consumer durables by duration of emigration leads to an identical conclusion: the longer the duration of emigration, the higher is the proportion of households possessing a car, a television, a telephone or all of them.

A three-way analysis of variance in which the index of the possession of consumer goods was the dependent variable, and community and migration status the independent variables, gave a very strong statistically significant degree of association between the consumption index and migration status. The relationship was independent of community as shown by the statistically insignificant interaction effect in which one of the factors is migration.

Education and Occupation : Although a large number of emigrant households used a significant part of the remittances they received for

education of their children, not much difference is observed in this respect between emigrant and non-migrant households. The average number of years of schooling of the members of the non-migrant households is found to be, in fact, higher than that of the emigrant households. But, internal migrant families have slightly higher average years of schooling than non-migrants. However, return migrants, both internal and external, have higher proportions of persons among them with higher education (secondary level or degree) than the out-migrants, both internal and external, have. The overall conclusion that emerges is that migration is highly selective. The observed difference between the migrants and non-migrants is a mixture of selectivity and consequence. It is not possible to differentiate between the two.

This is, however, not the case with occupation. A major motive behind migration, both internal and external, is improvement of economic conditions through occupational mobility. A comparison between the occupational composition of migrants prior to and after migration indicates that, in fact, there was considerable upward occupational mobility due to migration.

About 62 per cent of the emigrants and 55 per cent of the out-migrants changed their occupations after migration, all to "better" occupations. The proportion of migrants without a regular occupation (unemployed, students, unpaid family workers) decreased by 19 per centage points among the external migrants and 48 per centage points among the internal migrants. The proportion of migrants in high status occupations (government service, semi-government service, private sector, and self-employment) increased by 16 per centage points among emigrants and 48 per centage points among the out-migrants. However, after migrants' return to Kerala, the improvements achieved during migration in the occupational status could not be maintained. The increase

in the proportion of high status occupations after return was only 14 per centage points (16 per centage points before return) among the international migrants and 18 per centage points (48 per centage points before return) among the internal migrants

The improvement in employment status was much more marked among the internal migrants than among the external migrants. The change was not uniform among the communities being much larger among Syrian Christians and Nairs than among other communities.

V. Factors and Determinants of Migration

The first step in identifying determinants of migration is an analysis of the factors associated with migration. An understanding of these factors, combined with an intimate knowledge of the socio-economic situation of the population at origin and that at destination, should help in formulating a framework of the determinants of migration.

In our analysis of the determinants of migration, we differentiate the **roots cause of migration** from proximate causes or facilitating causes. We characterize the latter as **factors associated with migration**, rather than determinants of migration.

Major Factors

Analysis of migration selectivity given earlier identified the following principal factors associated with Kerala migration. They are:

- **Sex** is associated with migration propensities. Among the males, migration propensity is 10.3 times higher than among females in the case of emigration and 3.3 times higher in the case of out-migration.
- **Age** is very strongly associated with migration. If a person is in the 25-29 age group his propensity to migrate is 3.2 times

the general average for all age groups in the case of emigration, and 2.2 times in the case of out-migration.

- **Marital status** is strongly associated with the propensities to migrate. Among the emigrants, migration propensity among single persons is 2.0 times the propensity among the married. Among the out-migrants, it is 6.6 times. The chance of a divorced person to emigrate is 6.6 times than among the widowed in the case of emigration and 20 times in the case of out-migration.
- **Education** of a person is associated with migration propensity. If a person is a degree holder, his emigration propensity is 2.0 times the general average. If he has a secondary school certificate he has a migration propensity 1.6 times the general average; if he is illiterate, his chance of migration is only one-tenth of the general average. Educational differentials are even more marked among the out-migrants: 2.7 times for degree holders and 2.5 times for secondary certificate holders.
- **Education of the head of the household** is very strongly associated with migration propensities, but the pattern of the differentials is different. Emigration propensities are higher among the illiterate and the, "literate without schooling". Migration propensity is relatively low if the head has a degree or a secondary school certificate. Dependents of heads with good education do not migrate as often as dependents of heads with poor educational qualifications do.
- **Occupation** of a person is very strongly associated with migration propensities. In general, those who do not have a job have very high migration propensities. Those with good jobs do not migrate.

- **Occupation of the head of the household** is also strongly associated with migration propensity. The highest migration propensity is among households headed by those who are voluntarily unemployed, are pensioners, or are self-employed.
- **Community** of a person is very strongly associated with higher migration propensities: In the case of emigration, the migration propensity is 1.8 times the general average in the case of Muslims and 1.3 times for Syrian Christians. All other communities have lower than average migration propensities. In the case of out-migration, Muslims have the lowest migration propensity, 0.4 times of the general average while Syrian Christians have the highest (2.2 times). Nairs, Ezhawas, and Latin Christians have higher-than-average out-migration propensities.

A few other relationships are also relevant for understanding the associated factors of migration. Regression analyses indicated that the birth rate in an area has a statistically significant positive association with emigration rate; density of population is positively associated and per capita SDP is negatively associated with emigration rate. Emigration rates are usually high in districts in which per capita SDP is low. Migration propensities are not very different among the various land owning classes.

These being the principal factors associated with migration which this study has identified, we have to build on their basis a credible framework of the determinants of migration from Kerala.

Migration is a result of the operation of negative factors (push factors) in the areas of origin and positive factors (pull factors) at destinations. Analysis of the determinants of migration is incomplete if

it is confined to the conditions at either end alone. Those at destinations are particularly relevant for international migration, as external migration is often restricted by visa requirement, work permit, quota restrictions, political considerations, etc. This study has very little information on the pull factors, especially those outside the country. Therefore, the formulation of the determinants of migration from Kerala given below is applicable more to internal migration than to external migration.

At the origin, we postulate that the root cause of migration was the Kerala Model of Development - a vibrant social sector co-existing with a stagnant productive sector.

Based on the analysis of the factors associated with migration, we identify four elements in the Kerala Model of Development, which contributed to migration from the State.

First, the rapid decline in mortality (and the resulting demographic expansion). This is the first element in the Kerala Model of Development, which in our framework had a significant impact on migration propensities from Kerala.

To the extent that unemployment and low wages are partly a result of rapid population growth, demographic pressure has been a primary factor in migration from Kerala. The demographic transition, especially sustained mortality decline, took place in Kerala several decades ahead of other states of India. Therefore, the rate of population growth and population density were much higher in Kerala than in other states. The rapid decline in mortality created a demographic imbalance which was rectified first through migration and later through birth control.

Second, stagnation in the agricultural sector in Kerala following the wage hikes and agrarian and other reforms of the 1960s introduced without the necessary follow-up reforms such as agricultural

mechanization. This has been another element in the determinants of migration from the State, especially internal (out) migration.

A very high proportion of out-migrants and emigrants from the State have their origin in the coastal and mid-land regions of the State where rice and coconut are the main agricultural crops, the main means of subsistence, and the main source of cash income. After the agrarian reforms, especially the wage reforms, and in the context of a militant opposition to agricultural mechanisation, agriculture, particularly rice and coconut cultivation, had lost much of its profitability. Rice land lost much of its value as a source of income or an investment option in the mid-land and the coastal regions of the State.

Land reforms also had an impact, but only marginal, on migration. Faced with increasing difficulty in finding new plots of land to put up "huts" of their own, the children of "hutment" dwellers were forced to move to other regions of the State, or to other states in India, to establish a family of their own. Thus, land reforms had played a certain catalytic role in changing the attitude of the population towards migration as a viable option to deal with the problem of population pressure

Third, the accelerated development in education, especially education at higher levels. Education expansion is a major element of the Kerala Model of Development.

Stagnation in the agricultural sector gave a further boost to educational development in the State. With the traditional agriculture offering very little scope for upward socio-economic mobility and rice land losing out as an investment option, parents turned to education as the best option for ensuring their children's future well being. The gap between the supply of educated persons and the opportunities available for their placement in the State worsened. It became necessary and

attractive for the educated of Kerala youth to seek employment in the fast developing metropolitan centres in the other states. More and more of the educated youths in the midland and the coastal regions opted for migration instead of staking their future in the withering agricultural sector back home.

Fourth, the failure of the economic organisation in the State to expand employment in the secondary and the tertiary sectors. The question whether this failure was part of the Kerala Model of Development is not very relevant; it came with it.

While population pressure, stagnation in agriculture, and educational explosion could, no doubt, exert a positive impetus to migrate, they by themselves would not have led to migration, if only the other productive sectors - secondary and tertiary sectors- could absorb the growing educated labour force. The failure of the state institutions to provide the required support and provide the favourable milieu for the growth of the secondary and the tertiary sector of the economy was an equally important cause of migration.

Thus, at the place of origin (Kerala), our framework of the determinants of migration includes four elements: demographic expansion, agricultural stagnation, educational expansion, and the failure of the state level institutions to provide the required support and the milieu for growth of secondary and the tertiary sectors of the State economy.

At the destinations, the metropolitan cites of India and in the Gulf countries, what Kerala lacked in terms of employment opportunities were readily available on a large scale.

Fifth, the growing economic opportunities in the metropolitan and industrial cities of India after Indian Independence, and in the Gulf

countries following the oil boom of the early 1970s. This is the fifth and final element in our assessment of the determinants of migration from Kerala.

VI. Policy Relevance

Based on the results of the research discussed in the preceding sections, we may conclude this overview with a few suggestions for formulation of policies regarding migration from the State.

Education: Undoubtedly the most significant aspect of migration from the State has been the large annual cash remittances which households in Kerala have been receiving. The estimate for 1998 was about Rs. 35,304 million, or about 9 per cent of the State Domestic Product. Households tend to under-report remittances; therefore, the actual remittances must well have been higher.

The total NRI bank deposits, which is made up of not only household remittances, but also institutional remittances, were much larger. Banking statistics indicate that the NRI deposits in Kerala in 1998 were Rs 127,350 million and that these deposits are growing at the rate of about 25 per cent per year (about Rs.25,600 million in 1997-98).

A critical policy issue is how best to make use of this fund for social purposes and at the same time meet the needs of the relevant households. The Kerala Government's efforts to mobilise these resources for the state's industrial development have not achieved much success. Emigrants seem to have little faith that the Government or public sector enterprises will do a good job with their money and provide them with a steady and reasonable return. With the prevailing work culture in Kerala, trade union militancy and political interferences, there is not much hope in the near future to persuade the NRIs and return migrants to entrust

their money with the government. At the same time, they could be persuaded to change their mind, if the right projects are selected as evidenced by the Nedumbaserry experience. Identification of development projects in which the emigrants have a stake and assurance of a reasonable return, could be the key to the success of the utilization of NRI funds and savings of returned migrants for the development of the State.

In the present situation, developments in the social sector have a fair chance of success in attracting investments by the migrants. Within the social sector, education has a strong claim for the migrants' funds. Consider the following findings of the research.

Emigrants are better-educated than non-migrants, yet about 16 per cent of the emigrants have just primary or less than primary school education.

Emigrants come from households headed by very poorly educated persons; nearly 60 per cent (double the general average) of the heads of the households have only primary or below-primary level of education. Only less than 4 per cent of the heads of such households, have a degree.

Kerala emigrants have very low levels of technical education. Nearly 80 per cent have no formal training at all, and only 20 per cent have a certificate, diploma or degree in a technical subject. In the early construction phase in the Gulf countries, lack of technical training was not much of a handicap. The level of technical training needed was at par with the situation back home. That situation seems to have changed in the Gulf countries. A statistical profile of the technical competence of the work force in the destination countries at present or a projection of that five years from now, is not readily available. There are, however, reports that Kerala carpenters, masons and other artisans are not able to

compete with those coming from the Philippines, Thailand and South Korea, and that the gap between Kerala migrants and the other expatriates in technical competence is increasing. The old-fashioned carpentry (for example) which the Kerala carpenters are accustomed to is fast disappearing. The new generation of carpenters should not only be competent in the use of modern tools, but also in their maintenance on a day-to-day basis. There is an urgent need to upgrade the technical competence of our artisans. Institutions to provide the needed training on a continuous basis should be set up. The technical level of the artisan's work in Kerala needs to be upgraded continuously and made comparable to the best in the other parts of South and South East Asian regions.

Remittance per emigrant has a statically significant association with the educational attainment of the emigrants: from Rs14 thousand per emigrant who was "literate without schooling" to Rs 47 thousand per emigrant with a degree. Improving the educational level of the emigrants could increase the volume of remittances to the State. Projection of future remittances, on the basis of the educational attainment of the emigrants alone, however, would be hazardous, as education is not the only factor affecting remittances.

Nearly 51 per cent of the emigrants were from Muslim households; and Muslim households received nearly 50 per cent of the remittances from abroad. At the same time, Muslims have the highest illiteracy rate, and the lowest proportion of persons with secondary school certificate.

Malappuram District sent out the largest number of emigrants (270 thousand); and it received the largest amount (Rs.6, 295 million) by way of remittances from abroad. Malappuram has the highest birthrate, the highest rate of population growth, the highest average family size, the highest proportion of illiterates, and the lowest proportion of persons with a secondary school certificate or a degree in Kerala

These facts establish a very strong case for formulation and implementation of public policies which would enable this educationally backward population to use part of the remittances they receive for the improvement of the educational levels of its people.

One way to do this could be to allow the Muslim community or any other educationally backward community, or persons from Malappuram district or any other educationally backward district, to establish what has now come to be known as self-financing educational institutions of their own, starting with general high schools, technical schools, colleges in general education and colleges for technical education being financed and managed by themselves.

What is mentioned above about self-financing educational institutions could be said also about self-financing hospitals, health centres, etc.

Return Emigrants : One area which calls for public policies is the rehabilitation of the large number of migrants who are expected to return after a few years of work abroad. A unique contribution of this study is the information it has brought together about the return emigrants. In 1998, their number was 739 thousand, but it is likely to increase to about 1.25 million by the turn of the century and to 1.75 million by the year 2002. Return emigrants were on an average 34 years old when they returned, mostly married (89 per cent of males and 78 per cent of females). A large proportion of them had only primary or lower levels of education (30 per cent).

Critical information needed for formulating policies for their rehabilitation relates to their occupational profile after return. What are the occupations in which the return migrants are engaged after return ? This research has indicated that 38 per cent of them were "self-employed"

and 26 per cent were working as "labourers in the non-agricultural sector". Compared to the occupational profile of the emigrants prior to emigration, the proportion of the return emigrants was lower by 20 per centage points among employment seekers, by 8 per centage points among "labourers in non-agriculture" and by 10 per centage points among persons employed in "private sector". On the other side, there was a huge increase (24 per centage points) in the proportion of return emigrants pursuing "self employment" as an occupation.

Based on these statistics, it is pertinent to ask: is there a real need for any direct public support for the rehabilitation of the return emigrants? We maintain that there is need, but it is more in the area of facilitating self-employment than in giving any direct assistance. This is easily said than done, if we take into consideration the work culture, the militancy of the trade unions and the type of political interference taking place in all types of economic activities in the State

Kerala Government's policy is to develop information technology at a rapid pace in the State. Among the return migrants, there could be several that have acquired expertise in this field while working outside the state. It is worthwhile surveying the expertise in this area available among the return emigrants and providing them with incentives to use their expertise for developing Kerala's information technology infrastructure.

Family Assistance. Migration has changed the family composition in many households. It has increased the number of single member households by 33 per cent, 2- member households by 43 per cent and 3-member households by 25 per cent.

Migration has increased the number of women-headed households. The accurate per centage change has not been calculated, but the overall proportion of women-headed households was 25 per cent. Among

woman-headed households, emigration rate is 38 per cent compared with only 15 per cent among man-headed households. This is a clear indication that emigration was a major factor in the increase in the proportion of woman-headed households.

Migration has increased the number of married women living separate from their husbands as the men work in another state or another country. The number of married men enumerated in the 10,000 households was less than the number of married women by 12 per cent. The number of married men under 35 years was less than the number of married women under 30 years by as much as 35 per cent. This means that a large number of young married women and men are living separated from their spouses.

These families which became single, or two-member; which became woman-headed; and which had young wives separated from their husbands are, no doubt, serving their self-interests; but there is also a considerable spin-off effect which serves the interest of the State. They bring in remittances, work experience and skills, and contacts with the outside world. They have a right for help from the community when they need it. The panchayats and the other local government organisations should be sensitised about these problems. They should develop local policies and programmes to deal with them.

Environmental Considerations. Migration has brought in several environmental problems, the chief among them being those created by the huge mansions coming up across the rural landscape of Kerala, and the large increase in the number of automobiles. This study has shown that the size and quality of houses built by the migrants have very little relation to the needs of their families as measured by the number of inmates in them, or to the landscape in which the mansions are built. The environmental consequences of using large quantities of cement

and concrete in the construction of these mansions are enormous. It is true that any Indian has a right to build the type of house he wants, or purchase the number of automobiles he wants to keep, but the environmental problems they create are of social concern. From this point of view, the society has a right to put limits on individual freedom.

VII. Conclusions

Emigration Prospects.

The number of persons going out of Kerala has been increasing ever since the 1940s. The composition of the migration flows has changed in the 1980s from predominantly out-migrating to predominantly emigrating. Out-migration has been on a declining trend, and soon, net out-migration could turn negative.

Will emigration continue to increase as it has in the past, or will there be a turn around soon? This question is very important for Kerala, as the future economic prospects of the State are very much tied up with the emigration prospects. Until now, the number of emigrants from the State has always been more than the number of return emigrants. However, the number of out-migrants from the state has remained lower than the number of return out-migrants in several recent years. More importantly, net emigration and net out-migration have both been on a downward trend during the past five years.

Future demographic trends in Kerala could come in the way of any large increase in the number of emigrants, as the number of persons in Kerala in the migration-prone age groups is likely to decrease in the coming decades. A slow down in the economy of the Gulf countries could be a second factor in the possible declining trend of emigration. Similarly, stiffer competition which the Kerala workers face from well-

trained workers from other countries in South and South East Asia, could result in yet another set back to emigration flows.

On the other hand, the sheer momentum of past emigration could ensure a period of increasing emigration trend for some more years.

On balance, our conclusion is that emigration will continue to increase for some more years, but return emigration would increase at a faster rate, resulting in a period of net negative international migration. Early in the next century, there would be another turn around in the migration trend. The number of return emigrants would become larger than the number of emigrants and net emigration would turn negative.

During the past 10 years, NRI bank deposits have been increasing at a healthy 20-25 per cent per year. The chances are that, there won't be a turn around in deposit growth for some more years to come. As the emigration trend would be maintained at least for some more years, though at a slower rate, irrespective of the trend in return emigration, remittances are also likely to increase for some more years.

The number of return emigrants might increase rapidly in the coming years. In addition to taking steps to rehabilitate them, the optimum utilisation of their expertise should receive due attention. Self-employment is the principal occupation, which the largest number of return emigrants has taken up. What is needed here is nothing more than creating the right milieu for them to take up self-employment with a sense of security and confidence. How to do this in the present highly politicised and militantly unionised Kerala scene is the big and taunting question for which this study has no answer to offer.

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