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A Report On Inter-State Migrant Workers in Ernakulam, Kerala



A Report On Inter-State Migrant Workers in Ernakulam, Kerala

August 2020

Prepared by

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Published by

Caritas India
CBCI Centre, 1 Ashok Place
New Delhi 110001
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Foreword

Inter-state migrant workers have become an important and integral part of the economy of Kerala. It is estimated that the state has about 3.5 million migrant workers from other states of India. To promote the living and working conditions of migrants, Caritas India initiated a pilot program in 2019 in Ernakulam District, in partnership with Welfare Services Ernakulam, the social work organization of the Archdiocese of Ernakulam- Angamaly. As a part of the program, a study was conducted to understand the struggles and challenges of migrant workers and recommend focused future actions to augment their access to services, welfare schemes and to promote their wellbeing in the state.



I am grateful to Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development, Perumbavoor, for conducting this study in a very short span of time. I also take this opportunity to appreciate the team of Welfare Services Ernakulam for facilitating the process and consolidating the findings of the study.

'Welcome, Protect, Promote and Integrate migrant workers' is the thrust of Caritas India. I am happy to inform the readers that Caritas India has initiated a Migrant Resource Centre in Ernakulam district, and we look forward to expanding it to other districts of Kerala as well as in other states. Caritas India is going to look at major migration corridors connecting the source and destination states.

I am extremely glad to release this report and hope that it will facilitate further discussions and actions amongst the government, policy makers, intelligentsia, activists, civil society organizations and other key stakeholders, in line with national and international standards. The findings of the study, I am sure, will not only help in developing future interventions but also in shaping the policy framework for the wellbeing of the migrant workers.

Fr. Paul Moonjely
Executive Director- Caritas India

Message

Dear Friends,

I am happy to learn that Caritas India is bringing out survey findings and the actions implemented during the last one year for the development and welfare of the migrant workers in our state especially in the district of Ernakulam as a pilot work.

It is learned that migrant people are really vulnerable and exposed to different types of risks as they are a non-native people. We have worked with many Government departments, business organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society Organizations alike in making maximum impacts in the lives of the migrant community we serve by introducing innovative programs, products and services.



Migrant populations are heterogeneous in terms of types, size, language and culture. The survey and its findings are really portraying the situations of the migrant community amidst us and we have reached to many with our accompaniment support services. We need to continue our endeavours to bring more tangible and qualitative changes in the prevailing situations and the support of the Caritas India is definitely invaluable..

I wish all the best to initiative to publish the achievements

With all wishes

Fr. Joseph Koluthuvellil
Executive Director- WSE

Acknowledgement

Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development is thankful to Fr. Paul Moonjely, Director, Caritas India for considering the vulnerabilities of inter-state migrant workers in Kerala and commissioning this study to CMID through Welfare Services, Ernakulam, Kerala.



Let me express our sincere gratitude to Fr. Paul Moonjely for supporting this research which provides pivotal empirical evidence and insights about the workers from rest of India in Kerala. We also acknowledge the valuable inputs provided by Fr. Jolly Puthenpura, Assistant Executive Director, Caritas India and Leeza, Thematic Manager, Anti Human Trafficking and Migration, Caritas India who reviewed the methodology, tools and finally the draft report and provided feedback for improvement.

We thank Fr. Jose Koluthuvellil, Executive Director, Welfare Services, Ernakulam and Fr. Paul Cherupilly, former Executive Director, for ensuring that CMID gets the best support from Welfare Services for successful completion of this study. Sobha Jose, Former Programme Manager Kerala, Caritas India and Siby Jolly, Programme Officer, Caritas India are also thankfully remembered here for facilitating the discussions that culminated to this research.

CMID appreciate the arduous efforts of the Project Sudhaar team of Welfare Services, Lalachan K.J., Project Coordinator and Field Coordinators Ayaz Anwar, Deepa Jose, Josin John and former Field Coordinator Unni Mohanan who mapped the migrant pockets in Ernakulam district and spent their evenings visiting residential areas of migrant workers and collecting the data ensuring the sampling rigour and confidentiality.

I congratulate my colleague Shachi Sanghvi, Research Fellow, CMID for passionately leading this research working with me, right from conceptualization, tool preparation, sampling, training of the field team, data management, analysis and preparation of the report. I also acknowledge the valuable contributions of my colleague Vishnu Narendran, Director, Advocacy and Partnerships who trained the Project Sudhaar team, oriented them to the nuances of labour migration and worked with us in brainstorming about the key research issues and framing the indicators. Finally, I thank all migrant workers who wholeheartedly participated in this study, their employers /house owners who provided the field team the necessary support, the officials of various government departments and to all the staff of Caritas India, Welfare Services, Ernakulam, CMID and all others who directly or indirectly contributed to the successful completion of this important research.

Benoy Peter, PhD
Executive Director, CMID

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Executive Summary

Inter-state migrant workers have become an important and integral part of the economy of the southern Indian state Kerala. The state is estimated to have about 3.5 million workers from other states in 2018. The commercial capital and industrial hub of Kerala, Ernakulam district has been historically the most attractive destination for inter-state migrant workers in Kerala. However, there is only limited empirical evidence available about the migrant workers in the district. The district was catastrophically affected by the natural disasters that had occurred in August 2018. Welfare Services Ernakulam, the Social Service Society of Ernakulam-Angamaly Diocese, with the support of Caritas India, has been actively engaged in the disaster risk reduction (DRR) interventions in Ernakulam district. Welfare Services has identified inter-state migrant workers as one of their target populations for DRR and other empowerment initiatives. In order to evolve evidence-informed interventions Welfare Services conducted a baseline sample survey in their target geography in Ernakulam district during the period from November 18, 2019 to January 02, 2020, in partnership with Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development.

Findings revealed that in addition to Tamil Nadu which historically has been supplying migrant labour to Kerala, West Bengal, Assam and Odisha have emerged as major labour migration corridors with Kerala.



Migrant labourers belonged to socially and economically disadvantaged communities who had limited employment opportunities beyond agriculture/agricultural labour at native places. Labour migration to Ernakulam district is found to be almost entirely driven by informal social ties of the migrant workers. Poorly organised, majority of the workers are engaged through informal work arrangements. Their knowledge about, and access to welfare measures provided by the state continue to remain poor.

Financially excluded, the workers lived in crowded and congested situations in single room dwellings. Highly vulnerable to accidents, injuries and diseases, the workers spend money from their own pocket for accessing healthcare in the case of a health emergency. In addition to unnatural disasters, migrant workers are found to be highly vulnerable to natural disasters and have only limited access to information and resources related to risk reduction, recovery and rehabilitation.

Concerted efforts are required by the state, the industries, CSOs and development partners to foster the inclusion of migrant workers. Since the migration to the state is driven by social network and is originating predominantly from a few states that have evolved as labour migration corridors, avenues for collaborative source-destination interventions may be explored by the respective state governments, trade unions and CSOs.

While addressing the vulnerabilities of workers from northern Indian states, the Tamil labourers should not be left behind. The trade unions in the state should take proactive steps to include the migrant workers also into their fold so that they enjoy the rights of a worker irrespective of their migration status. The social security measures for the welfare of migrant workers in the state needs to be made migrant sensitive and universally accessible. Given the vulnerabilities of migrant workers to disasters, focused interventions for DRR can substantially reduce their risk. Such risk reduction programmes should also promote safety at work since, the vocations taken up by migrants are prone to accidents, injuries, diseases and even death.



Introduction

Since decades, India is known to have been a country on the move with a large magnitude of its workforce living away from their native place. The opportunity to move from the most underdeveloped regions to thriving economic centres of the country for livelihood has the potential to be immensely transformative. However, the absence of a strong policy framework governing these processes has led to the creation of exclusionary spaces where the manifestation of rural poverty is evident in urban India. In other words, away from their homes, the migrant workforce do not have access to entitlements or welfare measures. The COVID-19 pandemic has been an eye opener for mainstream India to realise the vulnerabilities of migrant workers in the country.

Among the southern states, Kerala has emerged as a major destination for migrant workers with recent estimates pinning the number to about 3.5 million. The demographic advancement of Kerala and the resultant transformations in the labour force have facilitated largescale migration to the state. Migrant workers from other Indian states have become an important and integral part of the Kerala economy. Exceptionally high wage rates compared to the rest of India, sustained job opportunities, comparatively peaceful socio-political environment, etc., are some of the factors that attract migrant labour to Kerala. The migrants come from regions afflicted by agrarian crisis, poverty, climate change, conflicts and natural disasters. The major source states include West Bengal, Assam, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The informal networks which drive a bulk of migration in India have played a major role as intermediaries between the poor migrants in search of a livelihood and an employer who seeks cheap labour.



Migrant workers in Kerala are the major drivers of economic growth in various sectors such as construction, hospitality, plantation, iron and steel, fishing, mining and quarrying, plywood and textiles. They in general, work for longer hours at lesser wages compared to the native workers and pose fewer challenges for the employer. Various categories of workers come to seek gainful employment within the state.

Most of them may be skilled or unskilled workers while some may have risen to the ranks of contractors and agents over the years. There are also workers who have settled in Kerala for several years and speak the local language while there are also seasonal or circular migrants who maintain a dynamic relationship with their source regions.

Unlike other receiving states, the Government of Kerala has rolled out several measures for the welfare of these workers. This include the Inter-State Migrant Workers Welfare Scheme 2010 which provides a host of welfare measures including disability allowance, health insurance, retirement benefit, repatriation of the body of the worker in the event of death, maternity benefits for women, scholarships for children's education, etc. to the enrolled workers.

The Aawaz insurance scheme which was introduced recently provides health insurance as well as accidental death insurance for the workers. An accommodation facility has been rolled out for male workers from other states in Palakkad district. The Social Justice Department has launched creche for children of migrant workers in several districts. The State Literacy Mission has launched a programme to teach the workers from other states Malayalam and Hindi. The Department of Education has been implementing programmes for promoting the education of children of migrant workers in the state. The National Health Mission has rolled out a link worker programme to recruit, train and deploy migrant link workers to improve the access to health-care for migrant workers.

Context of the Study

In spite of the attempts by the Government of Kerala to provide welfare measures for the migrant workers, a majority of workers live and work in precarious conditions. Their enrolment in such welfare schemes are abysmally poor. They lack access to adequate basic services such as health care, education or social security. Given their hazardous working conditions, the workers are exposed to the risk of accidents and injuries. Migrants also have limited access to banking and financial services. While the wages earned by the migrant in Kerala are higher than other parts of India, the cost of living also appears to be high. The xenophobia which is also evident in Kerala and the resultant stigma and discrimination also increase their vulnerabilities. Every time a crime is committed, fingers are raised at the migrants who are viewed upon with suspicion and mistrust. Migrant workers were one of the major vulnerable groups that were impacted by the floods and landslides that had occurred in Kerala. About 2.2 million workers from other states in Kerala were estimated to have been impacted by the disasters according to the Post Disaster Needs Assessment by the Government of Kerala and United Nations.

The commercial capital of Kerala, Ernakulam district has been historically the most attractive destination for inter-state migrant workers in Kerala. The district is estimated to have over six lakhs inter-state migrant workers in 2018. Ernakulam district is a hub for industries such as construction, hospitality, plywood, rice production, garment and apparel, furniture, petrochemicals and fish processing. Nearly 3000 children of inter-state migrant workers study in various government funded schools in the district. Places such as Vathuruthy, Perumbavoor and Ambalamugal are known to be major areas in the district where thousands of migrants live and work. Ernakulam district also has a large number of footloose labourers who are engaged in all kinds of informal jobs.

Ernakulam was catastrophically affected by the natural disasters that had occurred in Kerala in August 2018. Welfare Services Ernakulam, the Social Service Society of Ernakulam-Angamaly diocese, with the support of Caritas India has been actively engaged in the disaster risk reduction interventions in Ernakulam district. Welfare Services has identified inter-state migrant workers as one of their target populations for DRR and empowerment initiatives. Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development (CMID) provides technical support to Welfare Services in its initiatives to promote the welfare of migrant workers. There is only limited empirical evidence on the profile of migrant workers in the district and their access to services and entitlements. In order to evolve evidence-informed interventions, Welfare Services conducted a baseline survey in partnership with CMID with the support of Caritas India. This report summarises the key findings from the baseline survey conducted during December 2019-January 2020.

Objectives



The study aims to address the evidence gap on labour migration to Ernakulam district from outside Kerala, enabling Caritas India, Welfare Services, CMID and other stakeholders including the state to design and implement informed policies and programmes which are sensitive to the requirement of migrant workers and their families in the state. Specifically, the study explores the socio-economic characteristics of the migrant workers, the process of migration, their living and working arrangements in the district, their access to measures of social protection by the state, income, expenditure and remittance patterns, health problems and coping strategies as well as how they were impacted by the floods that had occurred in August 2018 in the district.

Methodology

The residential pockets of inter-state migrant workers in the three geographic regions identified for intervention (Ernakulam, Aluva and Perumbavoor) were mapped by the programme staff of Welfare Services under the guidance of CMID research team. Kochi Corporation, Kalamassery and Thrikkakara Municipal areas comprised the Ernakulam region; Vazhakkulam Gram Panchayat, Choornikkara Gram Panchayat and select wards of Aluva Municipal area constituted the Aluva region; Perumbavoor Municipality, Rayamangalam and Vengola Gram Panchayats constituted the Perumbavoor region. In these three regions, the team mapped and prepared a list of pockets where migrant workers resided.



In the list thus prepared, pockets with estimates of workers less than 40 were merged to the adjacent migrant pocket to get a minimum size of 40 migrants per pocket (Primary Sampling Unit). Very large pockets of migrant workers were segmented to a maximum size of 500 workers. In order to obtain a one-time good estimate on key indicators, a sample size of 400 was determined for the baseline survey. Assuming a 10 per cent non-response, the sample was inflated to target 440 workers. Following a self-weighting design, 20 migrant pockets were selected from the 109 mapped pockets through probability proportionate to size (PPS) sampling. From each selected PSU, 22 inter-state migrants were selected randomly.

In order to select the respondents at the PSUs, PSUs with more than 300 workers were made into segments of approximately 100 workers and from such segments two segments were randomly selected for data collection. Based on the required sampling intervals, dwellings/rooms of migrant workers were selected randomly and in each room all eligible migrant workers were listed. One worker per sample room was selected randomly for interview from the listed workers. At the field level, all random selections were done through the random number generator app installed in the mobile phone of the investigators. A respondent selection sheet was used for selection of the respondent at the final level.

Data Collection

A semi-structured interview was developed to gather primary data from selected respondents. This was prepared based on a literature review as well as in consultation with subject experts. The tool was pretested and revised based on the field experience in consultation with officials from Caritas and programme staff of Welfare Services. The final interview schedule is attached as Annexure to the report. Data collection was carried out by the programme staff who were trained by CMID. Out of the eight investigators, seven were post graduates and the other person was a graduate. A one-day Training for the investigators was conducted at CMID. Before actual data collection, each investigator also conducted a few mock surveys outside the selected PSUs in order to familiarize themselves with the data collection tool. Interviews were conducted in Hindi, Tamil or Malayalam depending on the choice of the respondent. Data collection for the study took place between November 18, 2019 and January 02, 2020. Most of the interviews were conducted between 5.00pm and 9.00pm at the place of residence of the respondents. This also included worksites where the workers lived. Oral consent was obtained from all respondents before conducting the interviews. The response rate was 96.8 per cent and the achieved sample size was 426. Each interviews took 20 to 30 minutes on an average.

Limitations

The sample does not represent Kothamangalam, Muvattupzha, Angamaly and Ambalamugal areas of Ernakulam district, which are outside the programme area of Welfare Services. Hence, does not provide a comprehensive picture of migration in the district although only Ambalamugal area exhibits a different profile of workers, given the prominence of workers from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Ensuring the rigour of sampling was a challenge as at some places where the owners of the building did not allow the investigators to enter the room for data collection. In such cases, groups of workers were identified outside the rooms and from among them the respondent was randomly selected. Ensuring complete confidentiality was also a challenge during data collection. Many a time, in the case of workers employed by an industrial unit or contractor, a representative was around which prevented the respondent from providing sensitive data without fear. However, such incidents are unavoidable in migration research. Hence, select variables were dropped during data analysis as the team felt that the presence of the representative of employer may have resulted in significant underreporting in case of such variables.

Profile of Migrant Workers

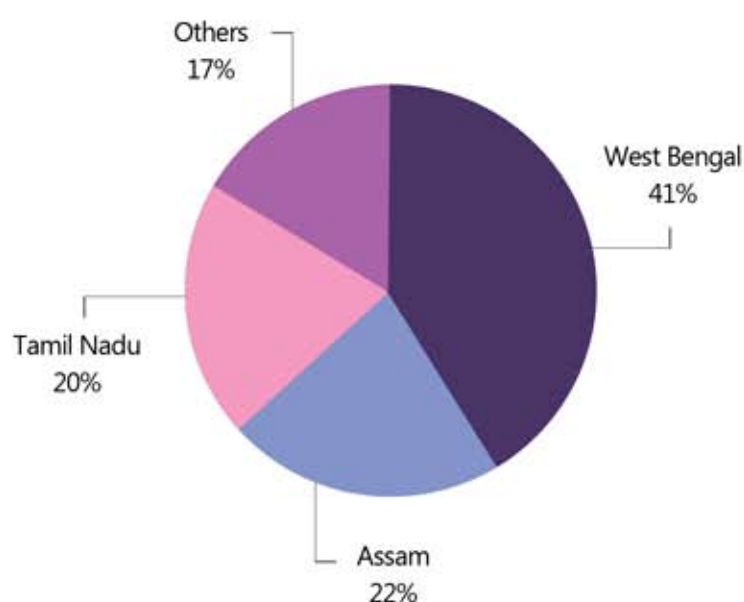
The study explored the socio-economic characteristics such as age, religion, gender, ethnicity, educational attainment and information about family of the migrant workers. Over the years, there has been a stark and visible difference in access to resources as well as the working and living conditions of migrants in the district from different states. Since the characteristics of the migrant workers may vary by their native state, most of the analyses was undertaken separately by the native state of the worker. About two-fifth of the workers in the area belonged to West Bengal followed by 22 per cent from Assam and 20 per cent from Tamil Nadu. The rest of the 16 per cent of workers predominantly belonged to Odisha, however there were also workers from states such as Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. One each worker from Nepal and Bangladesh was also found in the sample.



Table 1 provides the distribution of migrant workers in Ernakulam by their demographic characteristics. The median age of migrants was 32 years with the youngest migrant being 15 years old and the oldest, 65 years of age. About 41 per cent of the workers belonged to the age group of 20 to 30 years which indicates the presence of a rather young work force in the district. A majority of the migrants above 40 years of age hailed from Tamil Nadu. While comparing the median age of workers by state, workers from Assam had a median age of 24 years whereas for workers from Tamil Nadu, it was 41 years.

The proximity of Tamil Nadu to Kerala makes it easier for even older persons to come to work in the state. Also, migration from Tamil Nadu to Kerala has a longer history compared to the other states and several of them have settled in Kerala on the long run. This survey captured only one migrant worker who was below the age of 18 and was working as an unskilled labourer in the construction industry. However, other studies and documents have reported a higher prevalence of child and adolescent labour in Kerala.

Figure.1 : Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Native State, N 426



Over half the migrant workers reported that they followed Islam religion, and a majority of them were from West Bengal and Assam. Nearly all the migrant workers from Tamil Nadu followed Hinduism. A small fraction of migrant workers following other religions such as Christianity and Buddhism were also found. Men consisted about 86 per cent of the workers in the area. A higher proportion of female migrants were found among the workers from Tamil Nadu. Bengali was a mother tongue to over two-fifth of the respondents. Assamese, Tamil and Odia were the other languages spoken by majority of the workers. Languages such as Hindi, Telugu, Bhojpuri or Nepali were spoken only by only less than three per cent of the migrant workers. While analysing migration, ethnicity plays an important role as nearly two-thirds of the migrant workers in the area belonged to Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) or other minority communities. Migrants who belonged to the Other Backward Communities (OBC) constituted over half the total migrant workers. Only 2.6 per cent of the migrants belonging to Scheduled Tribes were reported.

Table.1: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Select Demographic Characteristics and Native State

Variable/Category	Native State				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Age in Years					
15 to 19	4.6	14.9	0	2.9	5.6
20 to 24	23.4	37.2	1.1	17.1	20.9
25 to 29	28.0	20.2	11.5	12.9	20.4
30 to 34	13.7	13.8	8.0	21.4	13.8

35 to 39	14.9	4.3	18.4	20.0	14.1
40 to 44	9.1	5.3	24.1	10.0	11.5
45 and Above	6.3	4.3	36.8	15.7	13.6
Median Age	28.0	24.0	41.0	32.5	30.0
Religion					
Hinduism	15.4	12.8	95.4	82.9	42.3
Islam	82.3	86.2	1.1	7.1	54.2
Others	2.3	1.1	3.4	10.0	3.5
Gender					
Man	93.1	94.7	57.5	94.3	86.4
Woman	6.9	5.3	42.5	5.7	13.6
Mother Tongue					
Bengali	100.0	1.1	0	1.4	41.5
Odiya	0	0	0	80.0	13.1
Tamil	0	0	100.0	1.4	20.7
Assamese	0	98.9	0	1.4	22.1
Others	0	0	0	15.7	2.6
Ethnicity					
Scheduled Caste	2.3	5.3	8.0	14.3	6.1
Scheduled Tribe	2.9	1.1	0	7.1	2.6
OBC	61.1	60.6	49.4	45.7	56.1
Others	33.7	33.0	42.5	32.9	35.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426

All the respondents were asked whether they could read and write in any one language and the findings are provided in Table.2. It was found that around one-third of all migrant workers were illiterate. Illiteracy was high among the Tami Migrants with 43.7 per cent not being able to read or write in any language. The data collected also reveals that one-fourth of the migrant workers have never attended school or had not received any formal education. Among the Tamil migrants, about 30 per cent had never been to school. Only about 6 per cent of the total number of migrants had studied up to higher secondary school or more. The migrants were also asked whether they had received any technical education such as enrolled in a course at ITI or received any other diploma. Only three respondents replied in the affirmative. The median years of schooling was five years overall whereas for workers from Tamil Nadu it was four years.

Table.2: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Educational attainment and Native State

Variable/Category	Native State				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Literacy					
Literate	72.0	64.9	56.3	67.1	66.4
Illiterate	28.0	35.1	43.7	32.9	33.6
Education Level					
Not Gone to School	22.3	28.7	29.9	20.0	24.9
Lower Primary	21.1	18.1	21.8	15.7	19.7
Upper Primary	36.0	33.0	34.5	40.0	35.7
High School	13.1	14.9	12.6	17.1	14.1
Higher Secondary and Above	7.4	5.3	1.1	7.1	5.6
Median years of schooling	6	5	4	4	5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426

Marital status also has a considerable impact on the dynamics of migration of a migrant labourer. Table.3 analyses data on the marital status of the worker as well as the location of residence of spouse and children in the case of those who were married. A little fewer than three-fourth of the workers were currently married. The proportion of unmarried migrants was higher among the labourers from Assam compared to other states. Almost nine in every ten Tamil migrants were married while three-fourths of the migrant workers from West Bengal were currently married. Majority of the migrants were single men depicting the typical scenario of long distance migration in India. While majority of the Tamil migrants in the district lived with their spouses, most of the workers from other states reported that their spouse lived at the native place. More than four-fifths of the migrant workers with children reported that the children lived at their native place. This was similar in the case of all states. These children are looked after either by a spouse who stays behind in the village, by grandparents, other relatives or they were put in hostels.

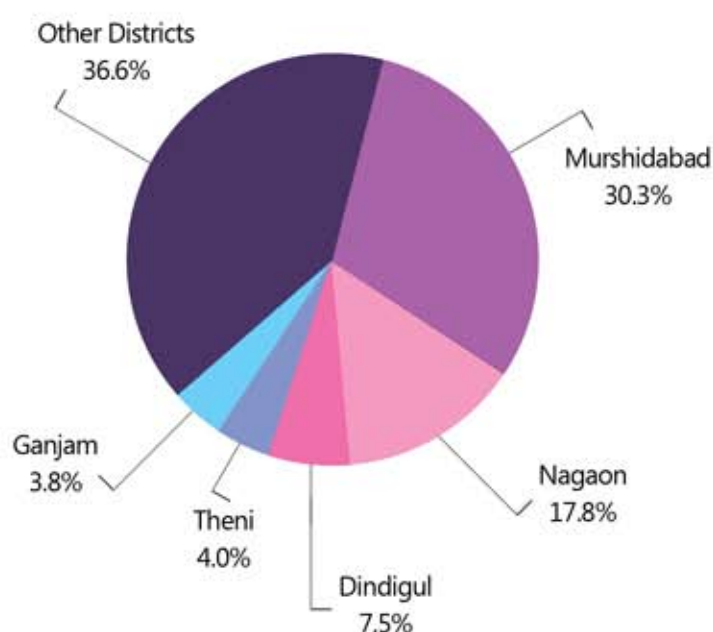
Table.3: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Marital Status, Location of Family Members and Native State

Variable/Category	Native State of Migrant Worker				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Marital Status (426)					
Never Married	25.7	51.1	6.9	22.9	27.0
Currently Married	74.3	48.9	89.7	77.1	72.3
Separated/Divorced/Widower	0	0	3.4	0	.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426
Location of Spouse (296)					
In Kerala	23.1	17.4	73.1	18.5	34.1
At Native Place	76.2	82.6	25.6	81.5	65.3
Other	0.8	0	1.3	0	0.6
Location of Children (296)					
All in Kerala	9.8	2.3	16.0	9.1	10.3
Some in Kerala	8.2	9.3	6.2	3.6	7.0
All at Native Place	82.0	88.4	77.8	87.3	82.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	120	42	81	53	296

Native Households

The study sought to understand a few aspects of the lives of migrant workers at their native place. This section explores some of those dynamics that would also impact a migrant worker's decision making processes related to migration. The workers were requested to provide information about their native states and districts, household composition, household occupation if any, ownership of land, monthly family income and expenditure and also their indebtedness if any. As detailed in the previous section, workers from West Bengal, Assam and Tamil Nadu constituted over four-fifths of the total migrant workers in the area. Almost half of all the migrant workers in Ernakulam belonged to two districts, one each from West Bengal and Assam. Murshidabad in West Bengal and Nagaon in Assam contributed to 48 per cent of workers in the district (Figure. 2). Theni and Dindigul emerged as the major source districts in the case of Tamil migrants. Several migrants from Odisha belonged to the Ganjam district which is among one of the most backward districts in the country.

Figure.2 : Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by District of Origin, N 426



The survey revealed that most migrant workers from all the states had household members dependent on them for income as evident from Table 4. These would include infants and children, elderly, persons with disabilities or unwell members of the household.

More than half the migrant workers had four to six such dependents in the household. Workers from Assam had more dependents on an average whereas for workers from Tamil Nadu, the median number of dependents was only three.

Slightly over half of the migrant households hailed from families who have been into agriculture or agricultural labour. While the family occupation of two-thirds workers from West Bengal was agriculture or agricultural labour, over 70 per cent of workers from Assam came from such households. More than 40 per cent of Tamil migrant reported that they did not have a family occupation. In Assam, three-fifth of the migrant workers' households were engaged in their own agricultural activities for income generation. As a proxy to understand the economic status of the households of migrant workers at native places, data on the type of ration card was elicited. Overall, there were about 12.2 per cent migrants who reported that their households did not have a ration card. Nearly one-fifth of the workers each from Assam as well as Tamil Nadu reported that they did not have a ration card at all. Over four-fifth of them had a Below Poverty Line (BPL) ration card.

About six per cent of the workers belonged to households with an Antyodaya ration card meant for the poorest of the poor. None of the workers from Assam had an APL ration card whereas the proportion of workers with an APL ration card was almost ten per cent in the case of workers from West Bengal. Table 4 provides the details.



Table.4: Percentage distribution of Migrant workers by Select Characteristics of Native Household and Native State

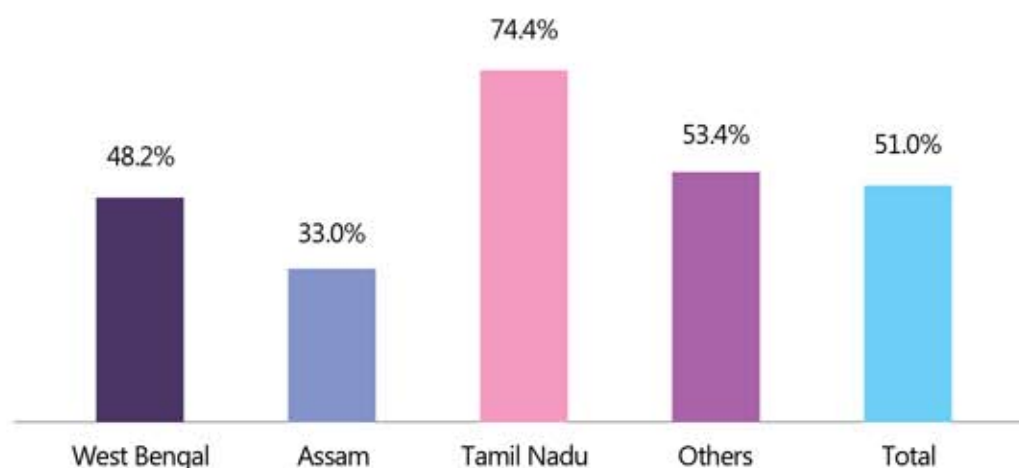
Variable/Category	Native State of Migrant Worker				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Total Number of Dependents					
No Dependent	2.3	1.1	14.9	2.9	4.7
1 to 3	22.9	12.8	42.5	30.0	25.8
4 to 6	57.1	56.4	36.8	60.0	53.3
7 and Above	17.7	29.8	5.7	7.1	16.2
Median	5	6	3	4	4
Current Family Occupation at Native Place					
None	32.6	18.1	59.8	38.6	35.9
Agriculture	47.4	60.6	12.6	41.4	42.3
Agricultural Labour	18.9	10.6	9.2	7.1	13.1

Other	1.1	10.6	18.4	12.9	8.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426
Ration Card					
No Ration Card	6.3	17.0	17.3	14.5	12.2
AAY Card	8.6	1.1	2.5	8.7	5.7
Other BPL Card	76.0	81.9	79.0	69.6	76.8
APL Card	9.1	0	1.2	7.2	5.3
Area of Land Owned (Acres)					
Landless	48.2	33.0	74.4	53.4	51.0
Less than 1	10.1	8.5	2.3	6.9	7.6
1 to 2	30.4	38.3	11.6	32.8	28.6
3 and Above	11.3	20.2	11.6	6.9	12.8
Median Area of land (Acres)	0.15	1	0	0	0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	81	69	419

Since such a large number of migrant households derived a livelihood from agriculture, it was important to gather data on the land ownership and cultivation patterns at the native places. The migrants were asked how much land they had owned. The study also attempted to find out if native households of migrant workers practised agriculture on leased/ rented land or on forest/common land. Lastly, they were asked about the number of months in a year during which the household practiced cultivation.

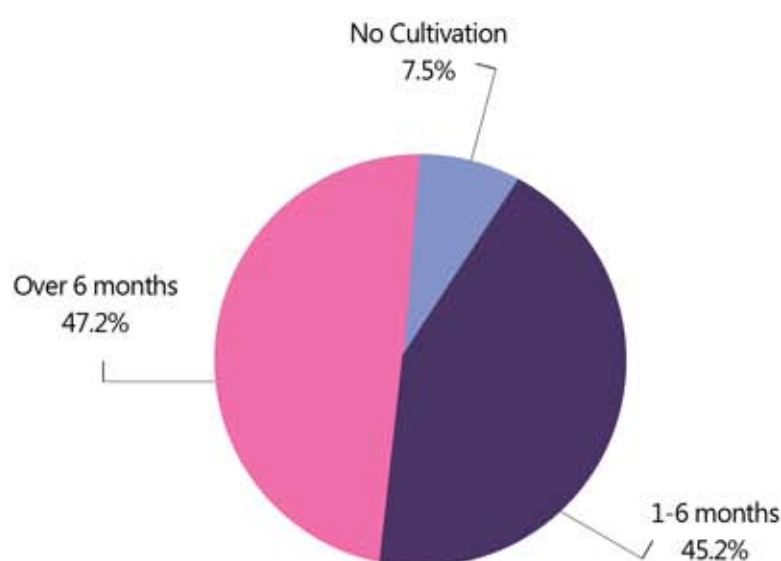
Half the migrant workers in the survey reported that their households did not own any land. It was prominent among the workers from Tamil Nadu as three fourth of the migrants from Tamil Nadu belonged to landless households. Migrants from West Bengal and Assam had larger land parcels than those from other states. Very few migrant households practiced cultivation on leased/rented or forest/common land. Figure.4 provides the prevalence of landlessness by native state of the worker.

Figure.3 : Prevalence of Landlessness Among Households of Migrant Workers, N 426



Among the migrant workers whose households owned land, over 90 per cent were engaged in the practice of cultivation. While nearly half of the households with land were engaged in cultivation for more than six months in a year, a somewhat similar proportion of households were engaged in cultivation for less than six months in a year as shown in Figure 4.

Figure.4 : Distribution of Migrant Households Possessing Land at Native Place by Duration of Cultivation Practice in a Year, N199



Lastly in this section, details on the financial conditions of native households of migrant workers is examined. The workers were enquired about the total monthly income of the native households from all sources other than remittances send by the migrant worker. Similarly, data was also elicited on total monthly expenditure of the native household. In order to understand the indebtedness of the native households of the migrant workers, they were asked if the households had taken any loan which the worker was responsible to repay. From those who reported having debts, data on total outstanding was also collected. The results from the analyses are provided in Table number 5.

The findings reveal that irrespective of the native state, the majority of the migrant workers belonged to poor households.

Slightly over one-third of all the migrant workers reported that their families did not earn any income from native place. Nearly three-fourth of the migrants from Tamil Nadu reported that their native households do not have any income other than what they send from Kerala. Native households of workers from Assam had better income at source compared to workers from other states. The median income of native households of Tamil migrants was zero. Median income of households of workers from states other than Assam and West Bengal had a comparatively lower income. As against low income levels, more than one third of the migrants reported having a monthly expenditure between Rs 4000 to Rs 6000. Native households of migrant workers other than West Bengal, irrespective of the state, had medium monthly expenditure of rupees 5000.

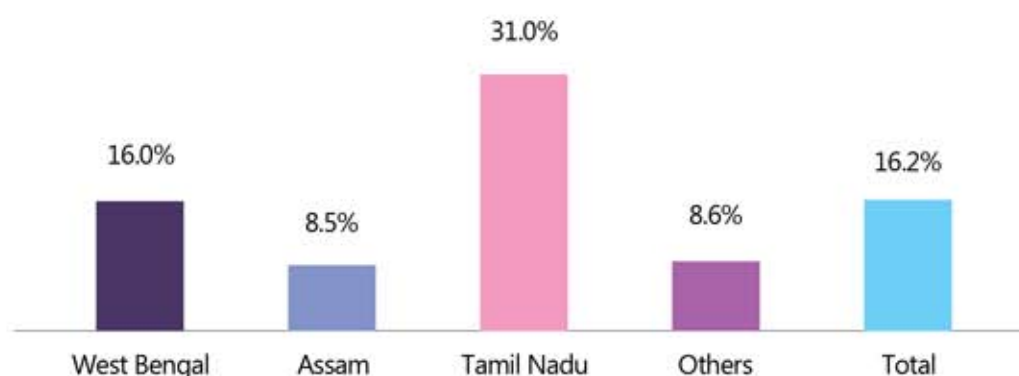
Table.5: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Monthly Income, Expenditure, Current Debt Status of Native Household and Native State

Variable/Category	Native State				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Average Monthly Household Income other than Remittances (Rs)					
No Income	34.9	19.4	57.0	38.6	36.6
Less than 3000	33.7	41.9	17.4	37.1	32.8
3001-6000	21.7	18.3	9.3	14.3	17.2
Above 6000	9.7	20.4	16.3	10.0	13.4
Median Income	2000	3000	0	1250	2000
Average Monthly Family Expenditure (Rs)					
Less than 2000	11.5	7.4	13.8	14.3	11.5
2001 to 4000	17.2	22.3	17.2	30.0	20.5

4001 to 6000	7.9	33.0	36.8	30.0	35.3
6001 to 8000	12.6	12.8	10.3	11.4	12.0
Above 8000	20.7	24.5	21.8	14.3	20.7
Median Expenditure	6000	5000	5000	5000	5000
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426

It was found that, overall slightly over 15 per cent of the native households of migrant workers were indebted and the proportion of workers whose native households were indebted, was substantially higher among the workers from Tamil Nadu compared to others. Slightly less than one-third of workers from Tamil Nadu reported that their native households had taken loans which currently the workers were responsible to repay.

Figure.5 : Percentage of Native Households of Migrant Workers Currently in Debt, by Native State, N 426



Among the native households of migrant workers that were currently under debt, slightly over 50 per cent had an outstanding amount of over 40000. Nearly ten people reported having an outstanding debt of over one lakh rupees.

Migration

The attributes related to the migration to Kerala are examined in this section. Information on the occupation of the migrant workers before they first migrated, experience of working in other Indian states, age at migration to Kerala as well as push and pull factors and related aspects are discussed here. A majority of the migrants were agricultural labourers before they had first moved out as Table number 6 reveals. Nearly one-fifth of them reported that they were unemployed before they had first migrated out of their state. Some of the migrants worked in nearby industries while about eight per cent of migrant workers reported that they were studying before they had first moved out for work. The percentage of workers who reported that they were unemployed before their first migration was significantly larger in the case of workers from Tamil Nadu compared to other states. Over half of the migrant workers from West Bengal reported that they were agricultural labourers before they had first migrated. The migrants were then asked the number of states they had worked in before migrating to Kerala. For three-fourth of the migrant workers, Kerala was the first inter-state destination. A larger proportion of workers from states other than West Bengal, Assam and Tamil Nadu had worked in other states before coming to Kerala.



Table.6: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Occupation before Migration, Experience of Working in Other States and Native State

Variable/Category	Native State				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Occupation before first Migration for Work					
Student	9.1	9.6	3.4	8.6	8.0
Unemployed	16.0	22.3	28.7	18.6	20.4

Agricultural Labourer	53.7	48.9	36.8	37.1	46.5
Industrial Labourer	10.3	4.3	10.3	14.3	9.6
Others	10.9	14.9	20.7	21.4	15.5
Work Experience in other States before moving to Kerala					
No Other State	77.1	78.7	86.2	48.6	74.6
One to Two States	17.1	18.1	11.5	41.4	20.2
Three and Above States	5.7	3.2	2.3	10.0	5.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426

The study also analysed the push and pull factors related to migration of labour (Table 7). Workers were asked to share the most important reason because of which they had to leave their native state for livelihoods. A majority of the workers cited low wages followed by lack of employment as the main factors responsible for migration from the source regions. Poverty, indebtedness and marriage in the family were some of the other reasons because of which the migrant workers had to leave their native states for some quick money. The workers were also asked to provide the most important reason that attracted them to Kerala compared to other parts of the country. Kerala offers the highest wage rates in the country and unsurprisingly, this was rated as one of the main reasons that had attracted the workers to this state. Continuous employment, which is often difficult to get elsewhere was another important reason listed by workers for migrating to Kerala. A small proportion of workers shared that they moved to the state because of the presence of their friends or relatives. Better climatic conditions in the state has also been cited as a factor that attracted some workers.

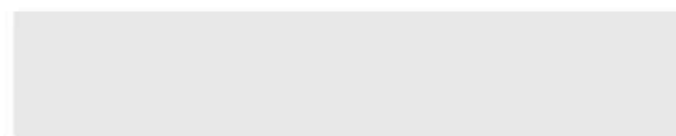
Table.7: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Select Migration Related Attributes and Native State

Variable/Category	Native State of Migrant Worker				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Reason for Moving Out from Native Place					
Low Wage	61.7	68.1	37.9	64.3	58.7
Lack of Employment	35.4	26.6	44.8	34.3	35.2
Other	2.9	5.3	17.2	1.4	6.1

Reason for Coming to Kerala					
High Wage Rates	71.4	68.1	50.6	64.3	65.3
Continuous Employment	22.9	26.6	26.4	25.7	24.9
Better Work Environment	1.7	3.2	3.4	4.3	2.8
Presence of Friends and Relatives	1.7	2.1	10.3	5.7	4.2
Other	2.3	0	9.2	0	2.8
Mode of Migration to Kerala					
Themselves/With Family/ Friends/Relatives	100.0	100.0	97.7	98.6	99.3
Recruited by Someone	0	0	1.1	1.4	0.5
Sent for Training	0	0	1.1	0	0.2
Duration of Intended Stay in Kerala from now (Years)					
Up to 3	10.3	13.8	10.3	2.9	9.9
4-6	9.7	4.3	9.2	2.9	7.3
7 and Above	10.9	6.4	0	17.1	8.7
Forever	10.3	1.1	11.5	10.0	8.5
Not Decided	58.9	74.5	69.0	67.1	65.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426

In order to understand how the migration was facilitated, the workers were asked whether they had come to the state on their own, if were recruited by someone or were sent to Kerala for training by somebody. As discussed above, barring a few, almost all workers came to Kerala on their own or with their friends and relatives who were already in Kerala. In order to get an estimate about the long term aspirations of the migrant workers, they were asked to specify the number of additional years they intended to work in the state.

Two-thirds of the respondents said that they had not decided on how many more years they would like to spend in Kerala. About ten per cent shared that they planned to work in Kerala up to three more years. Only 1.1. per cent of the migrants from Assam said that they intended to live in Kerala forever against nearly ten per cent of workers from other states.



Work

This section discusses the work profile of migrant workers in Ernakulam district. Their duration of work in the state and the district, type of work arrangements and the sector of employment, the nature of income and wages earned by them are examined here. The section also analyses the level of access of migrant workers to social security benefits such as Employee State Insurance, Provident Fund, or Gratuity. Finally, the section discusses the capacity building potential of the migrant workers based on their expression of interest to learn new skills. The workers were first enquired about their duration of work in Kerala since they had come first to Kerala state. They were further asked how long they have been working in Ernakulam district continuously. Results from the study are provided in Table number 8. Overall, nearly half of the workers have been working in Kerala for seven years or more. Three fourths of the workers from Tamil Nadu reported that they have been working in the state for more than seven years. About 46 per cent of the workers from West Bengal also reported working in Kerala for seven years or more. Nearly half of the workers from Assam had come to Kerala in the past three years. The duration of work experience of migrants in Ernakulam was similar to their duration of experience in the state indicating that Ernakulam has been their first Kerala destination for most of the workers irrespective of the native state. While overall, the medium duration of work in Kerala as well as in Ernakulam district was six years, on an average Tamil workers were in the state for 10 years while workers from Assam were the youngest lot in terms of duration of work/residence in Kerala as well as Ernakulam district.



Table.8: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Duration and Seasonality of Work And Native State

Variable/Category	Native State				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Duration of Work in Kerala (Years)					
Up to 3	28.0	48.9	20.7	632.9	31.9
4 to 6	26.3	25.5	5.7	27.1	22.1
7 and Above	45.7	25.5	73.6	40.0	46.0
Median Duration	6	4	10	5	6
Duration of Work in Ernakulam District (Years)					
Up to 3	30.3	51.1	23.0	34.3	34.0
4 to 6	25.7	24.5	5.7	30.0	22.1
7 and Above	44.0	24.5	71.3	35.7	43.9
Median Duration	6	3	10	5	6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426
Average Number of Months of Work in a year in Kerala					
1 to 3	1.2	0	1.2	0	0.8
4 to 6	11.8	8.7	19.5	17.9	14.0
7 to 9	31.7	33.3	18.3	28.4	28.5
10 to 12	55.3	58.0	61.0	53.7	56.7
Mean number of months	9.3	9.5	9.3	9.2	9.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	161	69	82	67	379

Among the workers who had spent in Ernakulam district at least on year, the pattern of seasonal/short duration migration was also explored as part of the study as workers are likely to remain at native place when there is availability of work during the harvesting or sowing seasons. About 15 per cent of the workers spent only six months or less in Kerala and were at their native place for the rest of the year. Over quarter of the migrants spent about 75 per cent of the year in Ernakulam while over half were in Kerala for almost throughout the year. Majority of the workers from Tamil Nadu were in Ernakulam district for most part of the year. The proportion of migrants from Assam had arrived recently compared to workers from other states. On an average, the workers spent slightly over nine months in Kerala for work.

The work arrangements, sector of employment and the skill level of the migrant workers were explored in the study. As shown in Table 9, over two-fifth were employed at a shop, establishment or a factory while over one third were footloose labourers who sought work from labour nakas across the city every day. There were also about five per cent of other work arrangements where workers fell under the category of domestic help and self-employed individuals.

Most of the migrant workers from Assam and other states were employees at shops, establishments or factories while a majority of the Tamil migrants were footloose labourers. Nearly one-fourth of the workers from West Bengal moved with a contractor whereas nearly one-fifth of the Tamil workers had such an arrangement.

Table.9: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Select Work Related Characteristics and Native State

Variable/Category	Native State of Migrant Worker				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Work Arrangement					
Naka Based Worker	36.6	4.3	65.5	28.6	34.0
Employee at an Establishment/Factory	37.1	92.6	3.4	55.7	45.5
Moves with a Contractor	24.0	1.1	18.4	12.9	16.0
Other	2.3	2.1	12.6	2.9	4.5
Work Sector					
Construction	56.0	12.8	79.3	40.0	48.6
Plywood/Timber	13.7	81.9	0	21.4	27.2
Hotel/Restaurant	2.9	2.1	2.3	14.3	4.5
Other	27.5	3.2	18.3	24.2	19.8
Skill Level					
Unskilled or Semi-skilled	65.7	34.4	79.3	72.9	62.8
Skilled	32.6	62.4	18.4	25.7	35.1
Other	1.7	3.2	2.3	1.4	2.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426

Approximately half the migrants worked in the construction industry while over a quarter of them were employed in the plywood or timber units in the district. Less than five per cent of the workers were employed in other industries such as hospitality, mining or iron and steel. About four fifth of the migrants from Assam worked in the plywood or timber industry. Most of the workers from all the other states were employed largely in the construction industry. Unskilled or semi-skilled workers comprised of a little less than two thirds of the migrants interviewed while one third of them were skilled workers. Almost 80 per cent of the Tamil workers were unskilled or semi-skilled. Over three-fifths of the workers from Assam reported that they were skilled workers.

Information was elicited on the duration of work and monthly income of the migrant workers (Table.9). About three fifth of the migrants worked for eight hours or below on an average. Workers from Assam, most of whom were employed in the plywood/timber sector worked the longest hours in a day, with half of them working for 11 hours or more. The mean number of hours of work was 9.1 overall while it was 12 hours for workers from Assam.

The median monthly income of the workers irrespective of the state was rupees 15000. Larger proportion of workers from Assam enjoyed better wages compared to the workers from rest of the states. This is obvious given that a larger share of workers from Assam were into skilled jobs and worked more time compared to workers from rest of the states.

Table.9: Percentage Distribution Of Workers by Duration of Work, Wages and Native Place

Variable/Category	Native State of Migrant Worker				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Daily Working Hours					
8 or Below	72.8	29.3	76.5	44.3	59.3
9 to 10	14.5	17.4	14.1	28.6	17.4
11 and Above	12.7	53.3	9.4	27.1	23.3
Mean	8.7	12	8.5	9.5	9.1
Monthly Income in Kerala through Wages (Rs)					
5000 or Below	1.7	4.3	8.0	0.0	3.3
5001 to 10000	17.2	11.7	13.8	15.7	15.1
10001 to 15000	37.9	41.5	37.9	37.1	38.6

15001 to 20000	31.6	38.3	26.4	35.7	32.7
Above 20000	11.5	4.3	13.8	11.4	10.4
Median Income	15000	15000	15000	15000	15000
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426

In addition to monthly wages, Information was elicited on the mode of payment of wages, how the wages were computed and who paid the wages. The calculation for these labourers can vary from industry to industry as evident from Table number 10. About 45 per cent of the workers were paid on a weekly basis whereas about 40 per cent were paid on a daily basis. The number of workers who received a monthly salary or earned an income on a piece rate basis were rather few. State wise, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu had a larger proportion of daily wagers while a majority of workers from Assam received wages on weekly basis. Workers from other states were mostly given a weekly wage or a monthly salary. It was also important to inquire about who paid the migrant workers their wages. Two-thirds of the migrant workers were paid wages by their employer while the rest, received wages from their contractor.



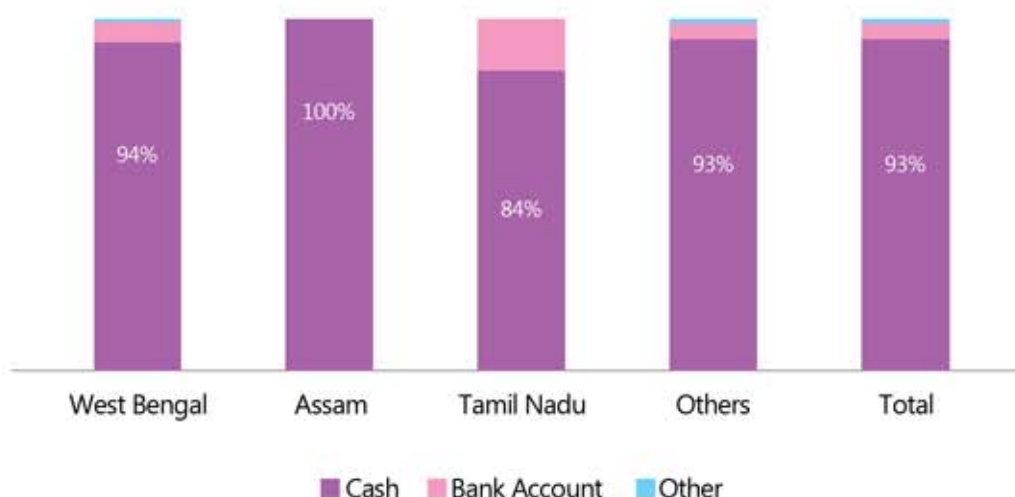
Table.10: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Nature of Wages Paid and Native State

Variable/Category	Native State				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Calculation of Wages					
Daily Wage	52.3	10.0	58.8	20.3	39.2
Monthly Salary	13.4	2.2	5.9	36.2	13.2

Piece Rate	.6	2.2	2.4	0	1.2
Weekly	33.7	81.1	31.8	43.5	45.2
Other	0	3.3	1.2	0	1.0
Paid Wages by					
Employer	62.2	91.1	40.0	71.0	65.4
Contractor	37.2	8.9	57.6	29.0	33.9
Other	0.60	0	2.4	0	.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	172	90	85	69	416

A majority of workers were paid their wages in cash (Figure 6). Less than ten per cent, most of whom were formal employees, said that wages were transferred to their bank accounts. The proportion of migrants from Tamil Nadu who received wages in their bank accounts were higher than all the other states. All the migrants from Assam reported that their wages were paid in cash.

Figure.6 : Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers in Ernakulam District by Mode of Wage Payment and Native State



Migrants were also enquired about the social security benefits they enjoyed at the workplace. Analysis of the data (Table. 11) provides a very dismal picture that only less than five per cent of the workers had ESI, PF and gratuity benefits provided by their employer.

Table.11: Percentage of Migrant Workers by Benefits Available at Workplace and Native State

Benefit	Native State				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
ESI	6.3	7.4	1.1	5.7	5.4
PF	5.7	1.1	1.1	1.4	3.1
Gratuity	1.1	0	0	1.4	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426

The migrant workers were enquired if they were interested in learning a new skill related to their livelihood (Table number 12). Three fourth of the workers responded in the negative saying they were not interested in learning any new skill. Among those who expressed an interest in learning a new skill that could lead to an increase in income, most expressed a desire to learn specific skills related to construction such as masonry, plastering or a course after which they could get work as an electrician or plumber. Several women also expressed that they were interested in learning tailoring for an additional income.

Table.12: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by their desire to Learn a New Skill by Native State

Desire to Learn New Skill	Native State of Migrant Worker				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Interested	22.3	14.9	11.5	21.4	18.3
Not Interested	72.0	81.9	78.2	68.6	74.9
Not Sure	5.7	3.2	10.3	10.0	6.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426

Living Arrangements

This section explores the housing, living arrangements and related attributes of migrant workers in Ernakulam district as well as their access to basic services like drinking water, electricity and toilets. Information was elicited from migrant workers about various characteristics of their dwelling unit and with whom they shared the accommodation. Although, it can be said that housing conditions in Ernakulam are better than the housing options for migrants in most other cities, there is still a lot of room for further improvement. Accommodation in congested and unsanitary dwelling units has an impact on the overall health of the migrant workers and would thereby affect their productivity and efficiency at work.

Table.13: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Housing Characteristics and Native State

Variable/Category	Native State				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Type of Accommodation					
Worker Quarter by Employer	16.7	87.2	0	41.4	32.9
Rented Room	55.7	6.4	50.6	42.9	41.6
Independent Rented House	25.9	6.4	44.8	14.3	23.5
Own House	0	0	2.3	0	.5
Other	1.7	0	2.3	1.4	1.4
Living Arrangements					
Live Alone	2.9	2.1	8.0	1.4	3.5
Live with Family or Relatives	24.0	6.4	80.5	15.7	30.3
Live with Other Workers	77.1	91.5	11.5	82.9	67.8
Sharing with Others	.6	0	0	0	.2
Number of Persons Sharing the Room where they Sleep					
Sharing with None	2.9	3.2	9.2	2.9	4.2
2 to 5	53.7	36.2	87.4	55.7	57.0
6 to 9	37.7	35.1	2.3	18.6	26.8
10 and above	5.7	25.5	1.1	22.9	12.0
Median	5	6	2	5	5

Monthly Rent Levels (Rs)					
No Rent	19.4	86.2	4.6	42.9	35.0
Up to 1500	54.3	7.4	20.7	44.3	35.4
1501 to 3000	18.3	6.4	72.4	8.6	25.1
3001 to 6000	5.7	0.0	2.3	4.3	3.5
6001 to 9000	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	.9
Median	800	0	2000	1200	800
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426

As shown in table number 13, various accommodation arrangements were found among migrant workers in Ernakulam district. A majority of workers reported to be living in rental dwelling units which could either be an individual room or an independent house in itself. One third of the migrants was also found to be living in quarters provided by their employer. Most workers from Assam lived in the quarters provided by the employers whereas none of the workers from Tamil Nadu lived in a worker quarter provided by employer. Home ownership among the migrants was found only among a minor proportion of workers from Tamil Nadu.

The study also examined at the living arrangements of the migrant workers. Over two thirds were sharing living space with other workers. State-wise, about 90 per cent of the workers from Assam lived with other workers. Most of them in this category would be single male migrants who divide the rent of the room or house among themselves. Tamil Nadu which has a higher proportion of family migrants had only 11.5 per cent in this category. Four-fifth of workers from Tamil Nadu were found to be living with family or relatives in Ernakulam. Less than five per cent of the migrants lived in a dwelling unit all by themselves. These could be skilled workers who can afford the rent of an individual house.

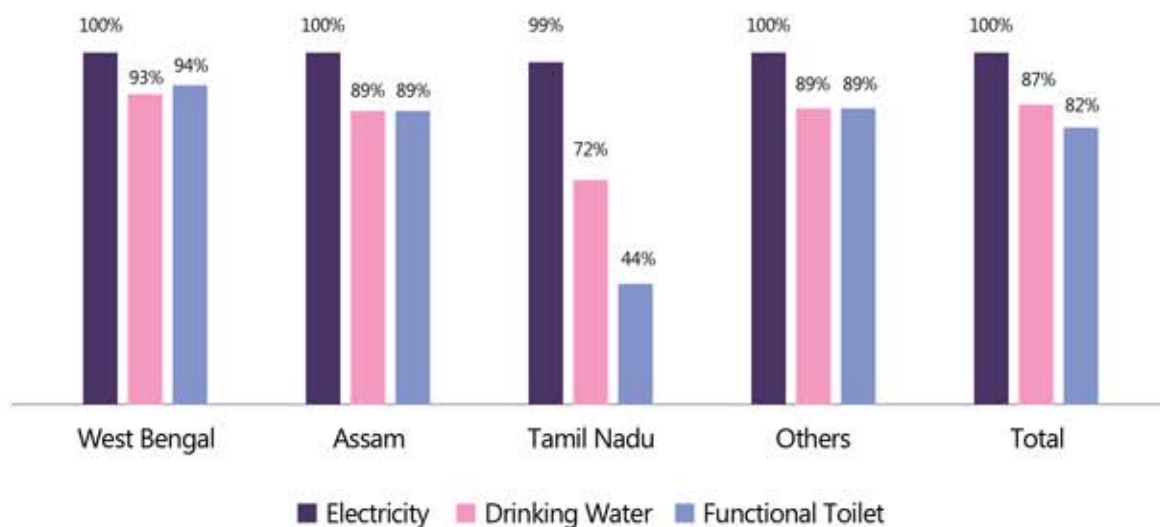


The study also analysed the number of people living in a room in migrant dwelling units. Less than five per cent said that they did not share their room with anyone. A little less than three-fifth of the workers lived in a room which is shared between two to five persons. Most of the workers from Tamil Nadu fall under this category. This is also the size of an average family and a large number of Tamil migrants lived with their families.

Migrants also lived in dormitory like dwelling units where a large number of migrants lived in a room together, each having just enough space to sleep and keep their personal belongings. About one-fourth of workers from Assam and one-fifth of workers other than Tamil Nadu and West Bengal shared their room with over ten people. The median number of persons shared the room where they sleep was five. There is a greater constraint on access to basic services such as water and toilets when such a large number of workers live together.

Monthly rent levels in Ernakulam ranged from zero to Rs 8500 and the median rent paid was 800 rupees. About one third of the migrants said that they did not pay any rent. These are mostly migrants for whom accommodation arrangements are made by the employer or those who have their own house. When migrants come to the city for work for the first time, they often live with friends, relatives or other family members till they are able to find a job and can afford to pay the rent themselves. Larger proportion of migrants from West Bengal paid higher rents as can be seen in Table 13. However, the median rent paid was highest for workers from Tamil Nadu who paid a median rent of rupees 2000.

Figure.7 : Percentage of Workers by Access to Electricity, Drinking Water and Functional Toilet at Dwelling Unit and Native State, N 426



The migrant workers were asked about the availability of drinking water, electricity and a functional toilet at their place of stay in Ernakulam district. Almost all the migrants in Ernakulam have access to electricity (figure 7). About 13 per cent of the migrant workers did not have access to a source of drinking water at their dwelling unit.

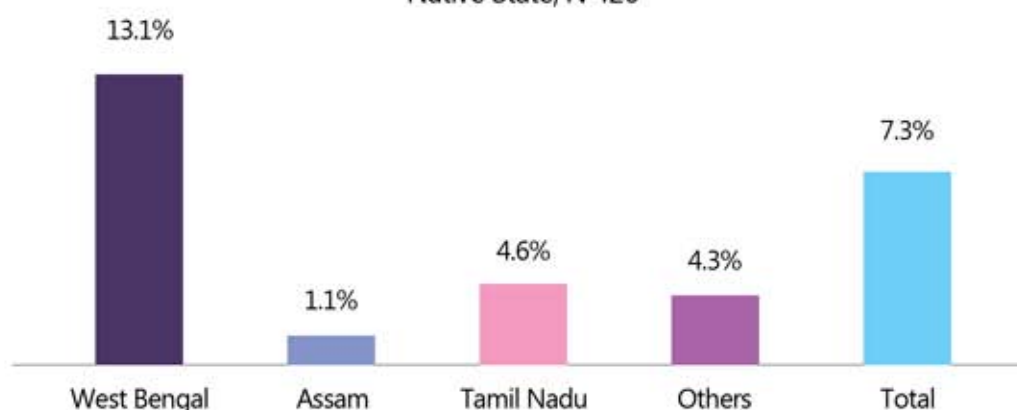
Most of these were from West Bengal, Assam and other states. Lack of functional toilets in migrant settlements was evident from the study as about one-fifth of the respondents said that they lacked access to one. Of the Tamil migrants, well over half did not have a toilet which they could use at their place of stay.

Table.14: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Source of Water, Method of Purification and Native State

Variable/Category	Native State				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Source of Drinking Water					
Individual Connection	13.1	6.4	18.4	21.4	14.1
Shared Connection	30.9	44.7	67.8	48.6	44.4
Well	46.3	48.9	10.3	28.6	36.6
Can or Bottled Water	9.1	0	0	0	3.8
Others	0.6	0	3.4	1.4	1.2
Method of Water Purification					
No Purification	81.1	72.3	78.2	78.6	78.2
Boiling	4.0	8.5	20.7	7.1	8.9
Filtering	14.9	19.1	1.1	14.3	12.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426

The migrants were further asked about the details about their source of drinking water as well as information about additional expenses which they incurred on water. Waterborne diseases are highly prevalent among migrant groups and hence they were also asked about the method which was commonly used by them to purify drinking water. Less than 15 per cent of the migrants had access to an individual water connection at their place of stay. A majority of the workers got drinking water either from a connection which they shared with other workers or from a common well. The use of bottled water was also reported by about four per cent of the respondents. The migrants who reported that they incurred additional expenses for drinking water, were mostly from West Bengal. It was noted that about 80 per cent of the migrants did not purify their drinking water before consumption. Only a small number of migrant workers said that they boiled or filtered water before consumption.

Figure.8 : Percentage of Workers who Buy Water for Consumption by Native State, N 426



Workers were enquired about the toilet facilities they had at the dwelling unit and Table 15 provides the details. Only seven per cent of the migrant workers had an exclusive toilet at the residence for personal use. Most of such workers were from West Bengal. The use of public toilets was highest among migrants from Tamil Nadu. Many of whom pay three rupees for every use. A majority of the migrants shared toilets with other families or workers from other rooms.

Table.15: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Type of Toilet Used and Native State

Type of Toilet	Native State of Migrant Worker				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Public Toilet	0	0	34.5	4.3	7.7
Shared Toilet	88.6	100.0	57.5	91.4	85.2
Exclusive Toilet	11.4	0	8.0	4.3	7.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426

Two-thirds of the migrant workers reported that they cooked their food (Table 16). Among those who cooked at their residences, two-thirds did not have a separate room that was used exclusively for cooking. Among the Tamil migrants, more than 80 per cent did not have a separate kitchen which emphasises the poor living conditions of this group. Cooking and carrying out other activities such as sleeping in the same room can have a detrimental impact on the health of these migrant workers and in particular, lead to some forms of respiratory diseases. About a quarter of the migrants had a separate kitchen while the others cooked outside their dwelling unit. Cooking in the open, especially in an unsanitary environment exposes the cooked food to dust and germs and can again lead to illnesses.



Table.16: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Availability of Cooking Space and Native State

Variable/Category	Native State of Migrant Worker				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
No Separate Room	62.5	43.2	84.0	50.0	63.7
Cook Outside the Room/House	14.0	16.2	1.3	15.9	11.3
Exclusive Room Used as Kitchen	23.5	40.5	14.7	34.1	25.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426

Poorly lit and ventilated spaces can be a breeding ground for illnesses and are one of the main characteristics of dwelling units occupied by the poor. The presence of a window or ventilator is particularly important when cooking is carried out within the house. Among the migrant workers interviewed, 93 per cent reported that the room in which they sleep has at least one window or ventilator. Rooms where one fifth of the migrants from Tamil Nadu sleep did not have a window or ventilator.

Cooking gas and diesel were the main sources of fuel used by the migrants for cooking as shown in Table number 17.

While over one-third of the workers used cooking gas, about one-third of the workers reported that they used diesel as the cooking fuel. Almost four-fifths of the workers from Tamil Nadu used cooking gas as fuel for cooking. Nearly 60 per cent of workers from states other than West Bengal, Assam and Tamil Nadu depended on diesel as cooking fuel. About 45 per cent of the workers from West Bengal also reported using diesel for cooking food. Firewood was also used by a quarter of the migrants. Most workers from Assam who cooked food used firewood. Large number of migrants from Assam are employed in the plywood industry with access to free firewood.

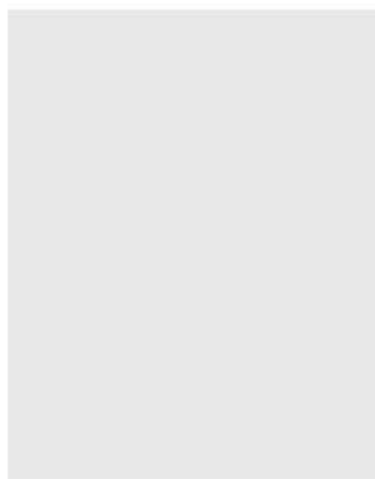


Table.17: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Fuel Used for Cooking and Native State

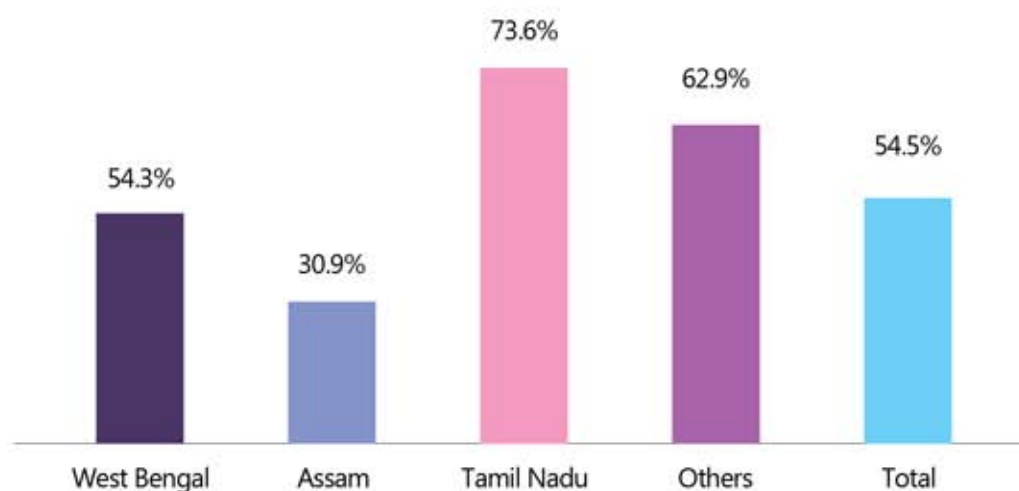
Fuel Used for Cooking	Native State				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Cooking Gas	25.0	8.1	78.7	20.5	36.0
Kerosene	1.5	0	2.7	13.6	3.4
Diesel	44.9	5.4	13.3	59.1	33.9
Firewood	28.7	86.5	5.3	6.8	26.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	136	37	75	44	292

A little less than one third of the migrants did not cook at their place of residence. Among them, a majority said that they purchased food from a mess at their work place and the others said that they would eat outside since they did not have the time to cook at the residence. The others were either not allowed to cook within the dwelling units by their house owner or were provided food by their employer.

Financial Inclusion

While Kerala offers one of the highest wage rates in the country, the costs of living in the state is simultaneously on the higher side as well. Several migrants interviewed have said that they did not bring their spouse because they found it unaffordable to live in the state when the spouse did not work. This section of the report discusses the financial status of migrant workers in Ernakulam district by examining their access to banking, savings and expenditure and remittances.

Figure.9 : Percentage of Migrant Workers with at Least One Bank/Post Office Account, N 426



When explored if they had an account with either a bank or post office, a little less than half replied that they had neither (Figure 9). Only around one-third of the workers from Assam had a bank/post office account while most workers from Tamil Nadu had one. Among the migrants with an account, more than four-fifths had a savings account as table number 18 reveals. The proportion of migrants with a post office account or a Jan Dhan account was negligible.



Table.18: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers who have Bank/Post Office Accounts by Type of Account and Native State

Type of Bank Account	Native State				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Jan Dhan	1.1	3.4	4.7	0	2.2
Salary Account	16.0	6.9	6.3	13.6	11.7
Other Savings Account	81.9	89.7	89.1	86.4	85.7
Post Office Account	1.1	0	0	0	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	94	29	64	44	231

The migrants were asked about the frequency of sending money to their family members at their native place as well as the total amount of remittance they had sent in the past three months preceding the survey (Table 19). They were also enquired about the mode via which this amount was transferred. Nine out of every ten migrant workers responded that they sent money home. Around two-fifth of the migrants sent some money home every month while a quarter of each sent money home weekly and as and when required. Compared to migrants from other states migrants from Tamil Nadu reported that they did not transfer remittances at all or sent money home as and when required. More than half of the workers from West Bengal and two-thirds of workers from Assam reported having sent over 20000 rupees home in the past three months (Table 20). The median remittance in the past three months was 24000 overall while it was 15000 for workers from Tamil Nadu. That is, on an average the workers sent rupees 8000 per month home while it is 5000 for workers from Tamil Nadu.

Table.19: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Frequency Remittance and Native State

Frequency of Remittance	Native State				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Never	2.9	5.3	17.2	2.9	6.3
Weekly	27.4	42.6	21.8	17.1	27.9
Monthly	44.6	31.9	23.0	55.7	39.2
As and When Required	24.0	20.2	36.8	21.4	25.4
Other	1.1	0	1.1	2.9	1.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426

The study also explored the different modes through which migrant workers sent money to their native place. Around half the migrant workers in Ernakulam district transferred money through money transfer agents. Almost four-fifths of workers from Assam depended on such agents. There are formal as well as informal agents through which money can be transferred. The agents transfer money for a small fee, generally Rs 10 for Rs 1000, from their account to the account of the migrant's family members. Often migrants are unable to use banking facilities because their working hours are in conflict with that of the bank and hence rely on these agents who are available throughout the week including Sundays.

Migrant workers also reported using their own bank accounts or cash deposit machines in ATMs for remittances. One-fifth of the workers each from Assam and West Bengal reported that they use payment apps for money transfer. The number of migrants who personally took cash when they went back home was relatively small. However, nearly nine per cent workers from Tamil Nadu followed this practice.



Table.20: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Remittance, Use of Select Modes of Remittance and Native State

Variable/Category	Native State				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Amount Remitted in Past three Months (Rs)					
Up to 10000	11.9	18.0	31.9	22.1	18.6
10001 to 20000	26.8	13.5	38.9	41.2	28.5
20001 to 30000	44.0	51.7	13.9	30.9	38.0
30001 to 40000	10.1	14.6	2.8	5.9	9.1
Above 40000	7.1	2.2	12.5	0	5.8
Median Remittance	25000	25000	15000	18000	24000
Use of Select Modes of Sending Remittance					
Bank or Post Office Account	32.4	18.0	33.3	57.4	33.6
UPI/Payment Apps	20.6	19.1	5.4	10.4	16.2
Cash Deposit Machine	32.9	24.7	30.0	38.8	31.6

Money Transfer Agent	46.5	78.7	29.8	25.0	47.7
Account of Other Workers	5.3	5.6	1.8	10.4	5.8
Sent cash Through Villagers / Friends	5.9	2.2	23.2	6.0	7.6
Personally Take Cash	.6	0.0	8.9	1.5	1.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	168	89	72	68	397

The details of the expenditure they incurred in the previous month was elicited from the migrant workers. The same is provided in Table 21. They had spent between Rs 500 to Rs 35,000 on expenses in the district with the median amount being rupees 5000. Expenses of migrant workers would vary mostly depending on the type of accommodation as well as whether they were single or living with their families. Migrants from Tamil Nadu had higher expenditures than migrants from rest of the states with about one third who had spent above Rs 8000. Three-fourths of the workers from Assam had a monthly expenditure below 4000 rupees in the month previous to the survey. The median monthly expenditure ranged from 3000 rupees for workers from Assam to 6000 rupees for workers from Tamil Nadu.

Table.21: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Financial Status and Native State

Variable/Category	Native State of Migrant Worker				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Expenditure Incurred in the Previous Month at Destination (Rs)					
Up to 2000	10.3	35.1	3.4	24.3	16.7
2001 to 4000	27.4	40.4	10.3	21.4	25.8
4001 to 6000	37.1	20.2	37.9	38.6	33.8
6001 to 8000	17.7	3.2	16.1	2.9	11.7
Above 8000	7.4	1.1	32.2	12.9	12.0
Median	5000	3000	6000	5000	5000
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426

Monthly Savings at Destination (Rs)					
No Savings	57.1	75.5	69.0	55.7	63.4
Up to 1000	10.9	5.3	5.7	7.1	8.0
1001 to 2000	13.1	8.5	9.2	18.6	12.2
2001 to 3000	9.1	5.3	1.1	4.3	5.9
Above 3000	9.7	5.3	14.9	14.3	10.6
Median Savings	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426
Mode of Savings (155)					
Savings with Employer	28.4	43.5	7.4	19.4	25.2
Savings with Friend	14.9	13.0	11.1	26.7	16.2
Savings in Bank Account	43.2	17.4	55.6	45.2	41.9
Keep Savings with Self	15.1	26.1	22.2	16.1	18.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	74	23	27	31	155

The migrants were also asked about the amount of money they saved every month, besides what they sent home. A little less than two thirds of the migrant workers did not have any savings at all. Three-fourths of the workers from Assam and almost 70 per cent of workers from Tamil Nadu reported that they did not save any money at the destination. Savings ranged between Rs 500 to Rs 15,000. About two fifth of the migrants who saved, reported that they deposited the money in their bank accounts. A quarter of migrants also kept their savings with their employer. There were also workers who had kept their savings either with themselves or with their friends.

Connectivity

Communication and connectivity play an important role in the lives of migrant workers as they live far away from their significant others and are in an environment that is socially and culturally very different from their own. Hence it is very important for them to connect with family members, relatives and friends from their native place to reduce the feeling of alienation and isolation. Migrants were asked about the type of mobile phone they used currently and the mode of communication used to keep in touch with family.

Table.22: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Type of Mobile Phone and Native State

Type of Mobile Phone Used	Native State of Migrant Worker				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Smart Phone	54.3	70.2	29.9	47.1	51.6
Basic Phone	42.9	26.6	67.8	52.9	46.0
No Mobile Phone	2.9	3.2	2.3	0	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426

Most of the workers owned a smart phone. Only 2.3 of the migrant workers did not have a mobile phone. About two-thirds of the workers from Tamil Nadu and over half the migrants from other states used a basic phone while a majority of workers from West Bengal and Assam used a smart phone. While almost all the migrants interviewed said that they spoke to their significant others over a regular audio call, the number of migrants who also used WhatsApp to have audio and video conversations was also substantial.

Social Security

This section examines the level of social protection of migrant workers in Ernakulam district. The table below highlights the low level of organization among the state's migrant workers. The membership of migrant workers in trade unions has been negligible. More than 95 per cent of workers were not members of any trade unions in the state. Among workers from various states, nearly one-fifth of the workers from Tamil Nadu were members of trade unions whereas in the case of migrants from other states, hardly one or two people were found to have membership in trade unions. Workers from Tamil Nadu, who have a much longer presence in Kerala, have built a better social network and are more connected better with the receiving community over time.



Table.23: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers by Membership in Trade Unions and Native State

Membership Status	Native State of Migrant Worker				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Has Membership	1.1	1.1	19.5	0	4.7
No Membership	98.9	98.9	80.5	100	95.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Number	175	94	87	70	426

The Government of Kerala has rolled out a few social security schemes specifically for the well-being and inclusion of migrant workers in the state. The Inter-state Migrant Workers Welfare Scheme was announced in 2010 and it has several provisions for the welfare of migrant workers and their families in the state. The provisions include health insurance and accidental insurance for migrant workers, educational benefits to children, maternity benefits to women and benefits upon the retirement from work in the state. This scheme, which requires an annual registration fee of Rs 30 witnessed a very low enrolment level because of the lack of awareness among workers and employers alike. In 2017, another insurance scheme was introduced called Aawaz where a labour card is issued to workers which serves as an identity card as well as an insurance card. Migrant workers who possess this card are entitled to free medical treatment up to Rs 25,000 at government hospitals and empaneled private hospitals. In case of an accidental death at workplace, the family of the migrant worker will get a compensation of rupees two lakhs. The study explored the awareness of migrant workers about the schemes of Government of Kerala for the welfare of the migrant workers.

The workers were asked whether they had heard about the schemes and if they had membership in them. Table number 24 provides the distribution of migrant workers in Ernakulam district by their awareness and enrolment in select welfare schemes of Department of Labour and Skills. A picture of Aawaz card was shown to the workers and they were asked if they had previously heard about such a card and if they had secured such a card. It was found that only less than one-fourth of the migrants had heard about the Aawaz Insurance scheme, most of them being workers from West Bengal and Assam whose enrolment rates were better compared to workers from other states. The difference in the number of migrants who have heard of the Aawaz program and have enrolled in the scheme was negligible. The few migrants who had heard of the scheme but did not enroll themselves explained that they had not enrolled in the scheme either because they did not know how to enroll themselves or could not take out time from their work to complete enrolment formalities. None of the migrants interviewed as part of the study had ever heard of or had enrolled under the Inter-state Migrant Workers Welfare Scheme 2010.

There is immense potential for the state to reach out to the workers from different states through various awareness campaigns on the benefits of enrolling in these welfare schemes which would substantially strengthen their social security. The safety net provided by these social security schemes is of crucial importance to migrant workers who are thousands of kilometres away from their native states where they have access to their regular entitlements.

Table.24: Percentage of migrant workers in Ernakulam district by level awareness and enrolment in select welfare schemes of the Department of Labour and Skills, Government of Kerala

Indicator	Native State				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Heard about Aawaz	25.1	35.1	19.5	12.9	24.2
Enrolled under Aawaz	25.1	33.0	16.1	12.9	23.0
Heard about ISMWWS	0	0	0	0	0
Enrolled under ISMWWS	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Number	175	94	87	70	426

The migrant workers who had enrolled themselves in the Aawaz Scheme were enquired if they knew how to use the card. Majority of them shared that they do not know the correct usage of the card in order to avail its benefits.

Migrant Health

Migrant health is often one of the most overlooked subjects while discussing migration and its impacts. Long working hours and exposure to hazardous working conditions have a detrimental impact on the health of migrant workers. They also live in poorly ventilated spaces which are overcrowded because of which contagious diseases and infections are quick to spread. Migrant workers have limited access to healthcare in the cities where they work, facing various barriers along the way. In Kerala for instance, inability to communicate about their symptoms with doctors in the local language is one of the most common reasons cited by the workers for not seeking health care. Migrants also tend to neglect accessing healthcare as it could cost them a day's wages because of the time spent in travelling and at the medical facility. A lot of them also use intoxicants such as pan masala or alcohol. This section of the report looks at their use of intoxicants, prevalence of health problems and their response to such problems, rates of hospitalization and related characteristics.

Use of Intoxicants

The use of select intoxicants was explored among the migrant workers. About two-fifths of the workers smoked bidis or cigarettes as Table 25 reveals. Nearly 30 per cent workers had the habit of using pan masala. About three-fifths of workers from Assam reported that they use pan masala.



Table.25: Percentage of Migrant Workers by Use of Select Intoxicants and Native State

Intoxicant	Native State of Migrant Worker				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Pan Masala	25.1	58.5	4.6	28.6	28.9
Bidi or Cigarette	56	30.9	24.1	25.7	39
Local Liquor (Alcohol)	3.4	5.3	12.6	14.3	7.5
Foreign Liquor (Alcohol)	12.6	6.4	25.3	12.9	13.8
Ganja or other Non-injecting Drugs	0.6	0	0	1.4	0.5
Injecting Drugs	0	0	2.3	0	0.5
Number	175	94	87	70	426

The use of bidis and cigarettes was found to be high among migrants from West Bengal particularly. Consumption of pan masala and foreign liquor was also common among the migrant labourers. Over two per cent of the Tamil Workers reported using injecting drugs whereas none of the workers from other states mentioned using injecting drugs.

Prevalence of Health Issues

The hazardous nature of jobs undertaken by migrant workers makes them vulnerable to injuries, some of which could be fatal. Lack of safety equipment provided by the employer and non-adherence to safety guidelines expose them to the risk of hospitalization in case of an accident. The workers were asked of the various health issues faced by them in the last thirty-days preceding the survey (Table 26). Fever was the most common ailment reported by more than one fourth of the migrants. Some of the other common complaints were breathing trouble, chronic cough and allergy or skin rashes.

The self-reported prevalence of the symptoms such as fever, breathing trouble, chronic cough for more than two weeks and allergy or skin rashes were relatively higher among the workers from Assam compared to other states. Overall about five per cent of the workers reported that they had experienced chronic cough for more than two weeks, the general symptom of TB. Prevalence of chronic cough for more than two weeks was about 8.5 per cent or workers from states other than West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

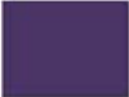
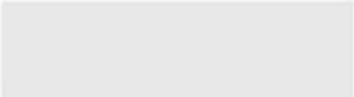
Table.26: Percentage of Migrant Workers by Select Self-Reported Disease Symptoms Experienced Over the Thirty Days Preceding the Study and Native State

Symptom	Native State				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Fever	24.6	33.0	29.9	22.9	27.2
Breathing Trouble	5.7	7.4	4.6	4.3	5.6
Chronic Cough for more than two weeks	2.9	8.5	3.4	8.6	5.2
Allergy or Skin Rashes	3.4	6.4	2.3	11.4	5.2
Sleeplessness	4.0	4.3	9.2	1.4	4.7
Vomiting	4.0	2.1	2.3	8.6	4.0
Loose Motions	2.3	1.1	1.1	4.3	2.1
Sudden Weight Loss	2.9	1.1	2.3	1.4	2.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Number	175	94	87	70	426

In order to understand the migrant workers’ access to health care, those who experienced the symptoms were enquired about the various remedies they had sought in response to the symptoms. It was found that more than three-fourths of the workers who had faced a symptom listed above had sought treatment for a medical doctor. More than two-fifth of the workers said that they had consulted a doctor at a government facility. Slightly over one-third of the workers had consulted a doctor at a private facility. Nearly 20 percent purchased medicines from medical shops or grocery shops instead of consulting a doctor. About 10 per cent of the workers either resorted to self-medication or did not seek any treatment. It was also noticed that some migrants preferred to follow indigenous or traditional forms of health care.

In addition to the symptoms, the migrants were also asked if they had suffered or were diagnosed with any illness such as malaria, chickenpox, jaundice, hepatitis, tuberculosis, leptospirosis, dengue or diphtheria in the course of the 30 days preceding the survey. Almost all the respondents replied in the negative stating that they had not experienced any such illness during the reference period. Four cases of chickenpox as well as one malaria case was reported during period.

Rate of Hospitalization



The migrant workers who worked at least one year in Kerala were enquired if they were hospitalised at least once in Kerala in the past twelve months preceding the survey. Results from the analysis are provided in Table number 27. One in every ten migrants who have been working in Kerala for one year or more reported having been hospitalised at least once in Kerala in the past 12 months preceding the survey. The lowest hospitalization rates were found among workers from Tamil Nadu whereas the workers from Assam had the highest.

Table.27: Percentage of Migrants Hospitalized in Past Twelve Months by Native State

Hospitalization Status	Native State				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Hospitalized	13.0	13.9	7.3	10.4	11.5
No Hospitalization	87.0	86.1	92.7	89.6	88.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Number	175	94	87	70	426

Half of those who were hospitalized reported that they had contracted a disease or infection (Table number 28). About 30 per cent of migrant workers were hospitalized due to accidents or injury. Such accidents mostly happened at workplaces and many had suffered head injuries or bone fractures. About three-fifth of the migrant workers who were hospitalized availed treatment at a private hospital.

Over two-third of those who were hospitalised reported that they paid the hospital expenses from their own pocket. The expenses of nearly one third of those who were hospitalized were paid for by their employer. None of the migrants reported having benefited from the Aawaz insurance to meet their medical expenses.

Table.28: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers who had Experienced at least One Hospitalization by Select Characteristics Related to Last Hospitalization

Variable/Category	Percentage
Reason for Hospitalization	
Accident or Injury	29.5
Disease or Infection	50.0
Other	18.2
Type of Hospital Admitted to	
Government	36.4
Private	59.1
Cooperative	4.5
Sources of Money Hospital Expenses (Multiple Response)	
Paid from Own Pocket	68.2
Paid by Friends Co-workers/ Relatives	0.0
Paid by Employer	31.8
Use of Aawaz Insurance Card	0.0
Covered under Other Insurance	2.3
Other	2.3
Expenditure Incurred in Rupees	
Up to 2000	42.7
2001 to 4000	22.7
4001 to 6000	13.6
Above 6000	11.4
Median Expenditure	2500
Total	100
Number	44

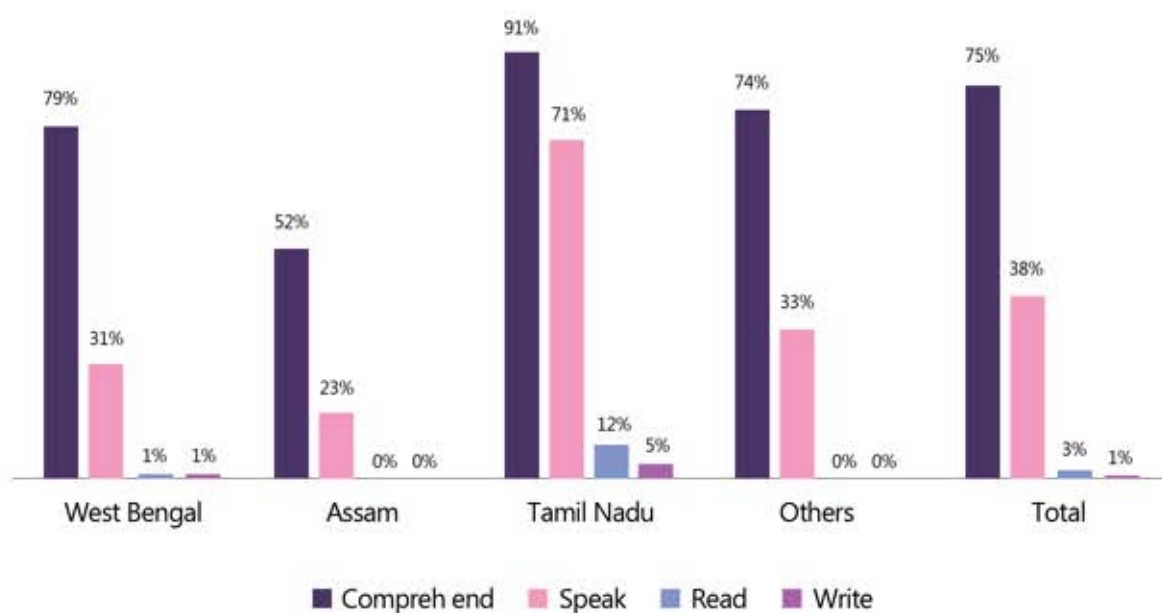
The migrants were asked about the expenditure they incurred during last hospitalization. Over 40 per cent of the migrant workers who experienced hospitalization had incurred up to Rs 2000 on hospital expenditures while a little less than one-fourth of them had spent between Rs 2001 to Rs 4000. Nearly one-fourth had incurred an expenditure of above 4000.

Language Abilities

One of the most significant challenges that migrant workers face while working in Kerala is the inability to comprehend and communicate in the local language, Malayalam. It is a barrier they encounter on a daily basis in their interaction with employers for work, access to basic services such as health and education as well as communication with the members of the receiving community. This section highlights two key issues related to communication for migrant workers. First, the communication skills of migrant workers in Malayalam is examined and then their interest in enrolling in a free Malayalam training programme is explored. Subsequently the status of the children of the school-going age of migrant workers who have accompanied their parents, is explored.



Figure.10 : Percentage of Migrant Workers by Ability in Communication in Malayalam and Native State, N 426



The migrant workers interviewed were asked to rate their conversational skills in Malayalam. Almost three-fourths of them reported that they can comprehend the language. Over a third of the workers were able to speak Malayalam. The reading and writing abilities of migrant workers was abysmally poor. Workers from Tamil Nadu had a greater proficiency in the language than migrants from other states with 71 per cent being able to speak and over ten per cent being able to read the language as well. Only two migrants surveyed were undergoing training on Malayalam under a structured programme. When asked the migrant workers whether they would be interested in learning Malayalam if a course was offered free of cost to them, nearly half of them expressed a desire to learn. The rest were either not interested in or had not decided whether they wanted to learn Malayalam or not.

Table.30: Percentage of Migrant Workers by Intention to Learn the Language and Native State

Whether Interested	Native State				Total
	West Bengal	Assam	Tamil Nadu	Others	
Interested	53.4	46.2	31.0	52.9	47.2
Not Interested	24.1	23.7	44.8	28.6	29.0
Not Decided	22.4	30.1	24.1	18.6	23.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	175	94	87	70	426

The migrants were then asked if they had children of school going age (5-15 years) in Ernakulam who were not attending school. There were 24 migrant workers with children between the age of five and 15 years in the sample of which only two said their children were not attending school.

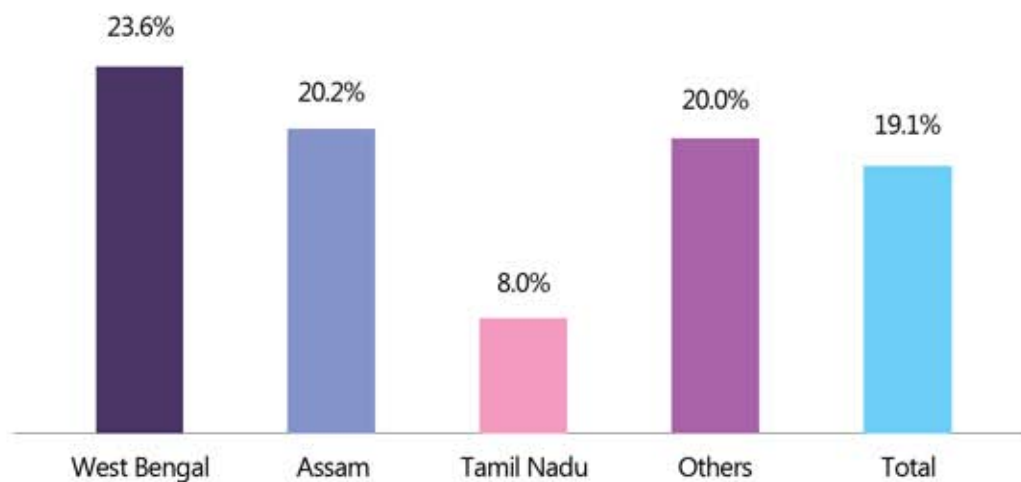


One of the main challenges that parents face with regards to education of their children is the medium of instruction used in schools. According to them, Malayalam is a difficult language for children, especially the older ones to grasp and understand concepts.

Impact of the Floods of 2018

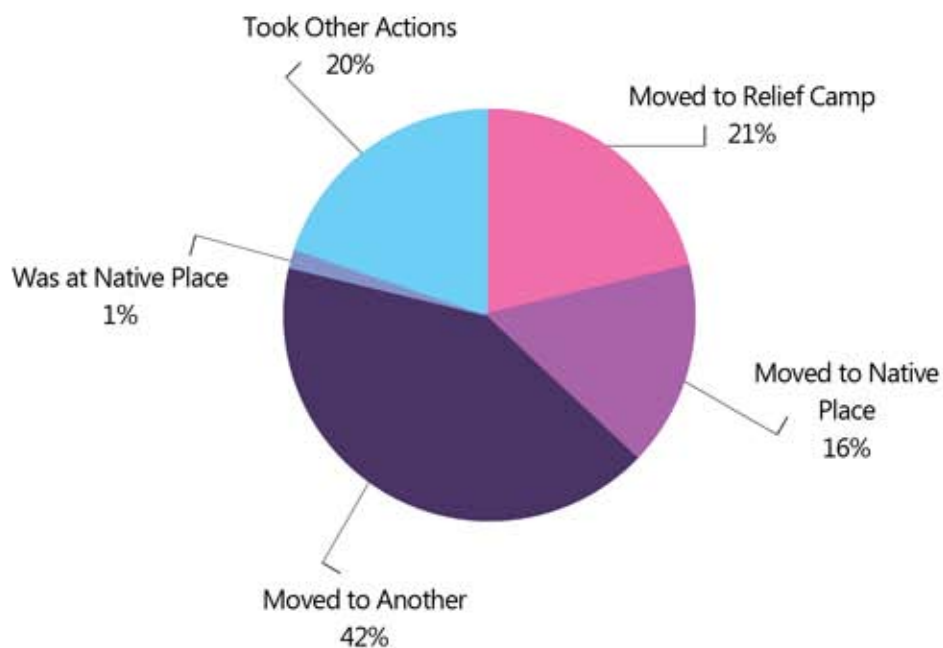
Kerala was ravaged by catastrophic floods and landslides in the month of August 2018. Like most of the other districts, the water levels in Ernakulam rose with catastrophic consequences on the lives of the residents. Migrant workers were highly vulnerable given the multiple barriers they have in accessing information as well as services. Their families back at the native place were also in a state of panic as they could not contact the workers in Kerala because of the breakdown in communication systems. Workplaces as well as places of accommodation of workers were flooded forcing them to seek refuge elsewhere. Industries and construction work came to a standstill which made it difficult for the migrant workers to sustain themselves during this period. This section of the report assesses the impact of the floods of 2018 on migrant workers in Ernakulam district by examining the action undertaken by the migrants who were affected by the floods and the extent of damage faced by them. It also examines the awareness about and access to the compensation announced by the state government for affected persons. Figure 11 highlights the proportion of migrants who were affected by the floods. About one-fifth of the workers were impacted the floods in Ernakulam district. Migrant workers from Tamil Nadu were less affected compared to workers from all other states.

Figure.11 : Percentage of Migrant Workers Impacted by the Floods in Ernakulam District in 2018 by Native State, N 426



It was also important to get a sense of the preparedness of the migrants to face the floods and to understand whether migrants had access to information during critical periods like these. The workers affected were enquired whether they had received any alert well in advance which gave them time to shift their belongings and move to a safer place before the area was flooded. Majority of the workers who were impacted reported that they had received an alert or warning. Among those who received a warning, about two-thirds said that their employer was their first source for information followed by one-fifth who received news through their friends or co-workers. The migrants who were affected by the flood were asked about the action they had taken when affected by the floods. About two-fifth of them said that they had moved to another place. The others either moved to a relief camp or remained at the same place. For instance, if the workers lived on the ground floor, they moved to a higher floor and waited for the flood waters to recede. Some of these people were stranded without food or water for several days. About 16 per cent of the workers affected said that they had returned to their native place when the place got flooded.

Figure.12 : Percentage Distribution of Migrant Workers Affected by the Disasters by Action Taken, N 81



Only 17 out of the 81 migrants affected had moved to a relief camp. More than two-thirds of the migrants were sent to a relief camp which consisted of both the locals and migrants while less than one-fifth were accommodated in a relief camp exclusively meant for migrant workers. The Government of Kerala had announced a compensation of Rs 3600 for all the migrant workers who had registered in relief camps across the state. Only one out of the 17 people who went to the relief camps was aware about the announcement of a compensation for the migrant workers who had registered in relief camps during the 2018 floods in Ernakulam district.

The extent of damage caused by the floods in Ernakulam district was massive. Migrant workers were asked how they were personally affected by the floods and the kind of losses they had incurred as a result. Over half of the affected migrants said that their place of residence was flooded. Those migrants whose residence was flooded were eligible for a compensation of Rs 10,000 by the government. Out of the 45 persons whose residence was flooded, a majority were unaware of a compensation of this nature and only one person had received this compensation.

Two-fifth of the migrants reported that their place of work was flooded. More than half of them faced some kind of loss of employment and wages as a result of the destruction at worksite. Some of the workers who fled the state, left without settling dues with their employers and had lost out on wages accumulated over several days. The exact monetary loss due to floods was difficult to quantify in the scope of this survey but nevertheless the workers were asked about the total damage and loss they had incurred in terms of money. A little less than a quarter of the migrants suffered losses up to Rs 2500 and another quarter suffered losses over Rs. 2500. Half the migrants said that they did not incur any monetary loss.



Conclusions

Introduction

Inter-state migrant workers have become an important and integral part of the economy of the southern Indian state Kerala. The state is estimated to have about 3.5 million workers from other states in 2018. The demographic advancement of Kerala and the resultant transformations in the labour force have facilitated such largescale migration from other states. Unlike other receiving states, the Government of Kerala has rolled out several measures for the welfare of these workers. There is only limited empirical evidence on the profile of workers, their working and living arrangements, access to healthcare and social protection, their utilisation of the services being provided by the state and how the workers have been impacted by the recent disasters in the state.

The commercial capital and industrial hub of Kerala, Ernakulam district has been historically the most attractive destination for inter-state migrant workers in Kerala. The district is estimated to have over six lakhs of inter-state migrant workers in 2018. Ernakulam district was catastrophically affected by the natural disasters that had occurred in Kerala during August 2018. Welfare Services Ernakulam, the Social Service Society of Ernakulam-Angamaly Dioces, with the support of Caritas India, has been actively engaged in the disaster risk reduction interventions in Ernakulam district. Welfare Services has identified inter-state migrant workers as one of their target populations for DRR and empowerment initiatives. In order to evolve evidence-informed interventions Welfare Services conducted a baseline survey in Ernakulam district in partnership with CMID. The study explores the socio-economic characteristics of the migrant workers, the process of migration, their living and working arrangements in the district, their access to welfare measures by the state, income, expenditure and remittance patterns, health problems, coping strategies as well as how they were impacted by the floods that had occurred in August 2018 in the district.

After a mapping and listing of residential pockets of inter-state migrant workers in the identified areas where Welfare Services planned the intervention, pursuing a self-weighting design, 20 migrant pockets and 440 workers were selected randomly for the survey. A semi-structured interview schedule was used to elicit information from 426 workers who provided consent for interview. Trained research investigators from Welfare services conducted interviews in Tamil/Hindi/Malayalam between 5pm and 9.00 pm of the day during the period between November 18, 2019 and January 02, 2020. This chapter summarises the context, methodology, key findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings.

Summary of Findings

Nine out of every ten workers were from four Indian states, West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu and Odisha and majority belonged to minority communities, Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribes. Most of them were married men illiterate or educated up to upper primary, whose other family members lived at the native state. Most of the workers had at least four dependents at the native place. Two-third of the workers in Ernakulam belonged to five districts; Murshidabad district in West Bengal, Nagaon district in Assam, Ganjam in Odisha and Theni and Dindigul in Tamil Nadu. Most of the workers were from BPL households that depended on agriculture or agricultural labour. More than half of them belonged to landless households.

Nearly two-third of the workers were either unemployed or agricultural labourers before they had first migrated and for most of them Kerala, particularly Ernakulam district was their first inter-state destination for work. More than 90 per cent of them were pushed out of their native places due to low wages and lack of employment. Very high wage rates and continuous availability of work attracted them to Kerala compared to other destinations in India. Almost all of them came to Kerala on their own, leveraging their social network. Majority of them have been working in Kerala for at least four years and on an average they worked in Kerala for seven to 12 months in a year.



Most were into unskilled/semi-skilled jobs and worked either in the construction or plywood industry and were paid either on a daily basis or weekly basis. One in every three workers was a footloose labourer who on a daily basis sought work at the labour nakas in the district. Almost 95 per cent of the workers did not enjoy any of the benefits such as ESI, PF or Gratuity. Most of the workers lived with other workers in a shared single room accommodation either provided by the employer or jointly rented by workers. Almost all dwelling units had electricity and in most such places drinking water as well as a shared toilet was available at the residence. They cooked food in the room where they lived and one-third of those who cooked, used diesel as the cooking fuel.

Only 54 per cent workers had a bank or post office account. Most workers sent money home weekly or monthly and predominantly depended on money transfer agents. Most of them incurred an expenditure between 2000 and 8000 in Kerala and were not in a position to save money from their monthly income. Majority of the workers reported that they can comprehend Malayalam and nearly 40 per cent workers were able to speak the local language. Only less than five per cent of the workers had membership in any trade union in Kerala. While nearly a quarter of workers had enrolled in the Aawaz insurance scheme of Government of Kerala not even a single worker had neither heard of nor had enrolled in the Inter-state migrant workers' welfare scheme, which is a much more comprehensive scheme compared to Aawaz. Most workers who had enrolled under the Aawaz scheme were unaware on how to avail the services.

Nearly 80 per cent of workers did not purify water before drinking. One in every ten workers who was in Kerala for at least a year reported having hospitalised in the past 12 months in Kerala and most of them cited a disease, accident or injury as a reason for the hospitalization. Majority of those who were hospitalised had availed treatment from private providers spending money from their own pocket. All most one in every five workers reported that he/she was impacted by the floods that had occurred in Kerala in 2018. Majority of the affected workers were first alerted by their employer. Almost all of the affected workers were unaware about the compensation provided by the Government of Kerala for migrant workers affected by disasters.

Conclusions

- In addition to Tamil Nadu which historically has been supplying migrant labour to Kerala, West Bengal, Assam and Odisha have emerged as major labour migration corridors with Kerala. Murshidabad-Ernakulam and Nagaon Ernakulam are two of the longest inter-district labour migration corridors that have evolved in India in the past few decades.
- Akin to most of the major destinations of labour migrants in India, the migrant labours to Kerala also belonged to socially and economically disadvantaged communities who had limited employment opportunities beyond agriculture/agricultural labour at native places. There is also a sizeable proportion of workers who are seasonal migrants. While they share certain universal vulnerabilities such as poverty, limited education, lack of employment; workers from each state also appear to have some unique vulnerabilities also.
- Unlike the general perception in Kerala that, migrant workers from Tamil Nadu were less vulnerable compared to workers from other states; they belonged to some of the most vulnerable migrant communities in the district given the proportion of older persons, high level of illiteracy, landlessness, lack of alternate income sources at native place, high level of indebtedness, footloose nature of their work, poor skill levels and poor access to WASH.

- Contrary to the tradition of labour migration which is by and large driven by agents/ intermediaries, labour migration to Ernakulam district is almost entirely driven by informal social ties of the migrant workers. Most of the workers came directly to the Kerala leveraging the information gateway they had established with their significant others who had already worked in Kerala.
- Poorly organised, majority of the workers are engaged through informal work arrangements and do not enjoy the social security benefit such as ESI and PF. Their knowledge about, and access to welfare measures provided to the migrant workers by the state continues to remain poor.
- While the living arrangements of migrant workers in Ernakulam district were much better compared to most of the migrant destinations in the country, they too lived in crowded and congested situations in single room dwellings where they also cooked even using diesel as the fuel.
- The native households financially depended the migrant workers and survive on the monthly/weekly remittances by the workers. While the workers in Ernakulam received reasonably high wages compared to most part of the country, a large proportion of workers are financially excluded. The workers received their wages in cash and given their poor access to banks and limited ability to save money, continue to be financially insecure.
- Migrant workers in Ernakulam are highly vulnerable to accidents, injuries and diseases and given their nature of work, limited access to public health facilities and incur significant out of pocket expenditure on healthcare. They are yet to benefit from the health insurance programmes of the Department of Labour and Skills, Government of Kerala.
- Practices such as drinking water without purification, living in poorly ventilated shared accommodation facilities and using fuels such as diesel for cooking in the room where they also sleep can have detrimental impact on the workers' health. The current hospitalization rates appear to be substantially lower than normal given their vulnerabilities and poor health seeking behaviour. This might also be because workers avoid hospitalization due to inability to pay for the services.
- Substantial number of migrant workers with children have brought them to Ernakulam district. While most of them are enrolled school, they do not have the opportunity to learn in their mother tongue which can hamper the educational attainment/continued education of the children if the workers return to native place.
- In addition to unnatural disasters, migrant workers are highly vulnerable to natural disasters compared to the native population. Their limited access to information can be traumatic in the event of disasters and they are less likely to benefit from the relief measures by the government.

Recommendations

- Given the profile of migrant workers in Ernakulam district, their working and living arrangements, poor access to measures of social protection concerted efforts are required by the state, the industries, trade unions and other CSOs as well as development partners to foster their inclusion.
- Since the migration to the state is driven by social network and is originating predominantly from a few states that have evolved as labour migration corridors, avenues for collaborative source-destination interventions may be explored by the respective state governments, trade unions and CSOs.
- While addressing the vulnerabilities of workers from northern Indian states, the Tamil labourers should not be left behind. Concerted efforts are also required to promote the wellbeing of the migrant workers from Tamil Nadu who have been contributing to the district's economy for several decades.
- Majority of the workers do not enjoy the social security benefits of a formal employee. Most of them have been working in the district for several years. The trade unions in the state should take proactive steps to include the migrant workers also into their fold so that, these vulnerable segment of workers are exploited neither by intermediaries nor by the employers, and they enjoy the rights of a worker irrespective of their migration status.



- While the Government of Kerala offers several social security measures for the welfare of migrant workers in the state, majority of the workers do not benefit from them. Poor demand creation, design constraints of the products, language barriers, inappropriate outreach measures, etc. are some of the major causes. The Government should leverage the availability, experience and expertise of CSOs in the state including trade unions to overcome these barriers.
- Measures need to be taken by the LSGs, public health authorities and CSOs to reduce indoor air pollution by promoting more efficient fuels and better cooking strategies. The state's initiative to provide food to the needy at minimal costs may be extended to the migrant workers also, by facilitating the availability of quality and nutritious food of their choice within easy reach so that, the workers do not need to resort to strategies such as using diesel for cooking.

- Measures are needed to promote the financial inclusion of migrant workers. Ensuring universal financial literacy, encouraging the utilisation of formal banking mechanisms through enhancing access and promoting saving habits can substantially help the workers improve their financial stability. In select areas, banks may consider working on Sundays or evenings also, given that most of the weekly payments are released on Saturday evening and the working time of banks are in conflict with the work timings of the migrants.
- Public private partnerships are needed to ensure access to quality and affordable healthcare services to migrant workers. The link workers being deployed by the National Health Mission in Ernakulam district may be complemented by the CSOs through demand creation and provision of healthcare services overcoming the language, location and timing constraints that usually prevent migrant workers from accessing quality healthcare services. Promoting safety at work and universalising enrolment in social insurance and facilitating utilisation of such services, can be of immense help to the migrant workers.
- Since there are substantial number of children of migrant workers in the schools in the district and most of them belong to three or four states, inter-state collaborations for providing education to children in their mother tongue may be explored.
- Given the vulnerabilities of migrant workers to disasters, focused interventions for Disaster Risk Reduction of migrant workers may be initiated. Such risk reduction programmes should also promote safety at work since, the vocations taken up by migrants are highly prone to accidents, injuries and even death.

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