

“THE PROBLEMS AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF MIGRATED WORKERS IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ERNAKULAM”

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INTRODUCTION:

Migrant workers have played a significant role in both national and local societies. Migrant employees seek a secure working climate and improved living standards. Migrant workers in the field of construction sector have now become an important part of Kerala's economy. These migrant workers found Kerala, especially Kochi, to be more attractive than their home state due to higher wages and better living conditions. Kerala is attracting migrant workers from West Bengal, Assam, Maharashtra, Tripura and Tamil Nadu. The migrant workers are controlled by labour contractors.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

In recent years, Kochi has seen a significant influx of migrant workers from various parts of India. Kochi is a desirable labor market for workers from outside the state because of its high wages, plentiful job opportunities, and shortage of local labour in the construction field. Hence, it is important to study the living and working conditions of the workers and the problems faced by them and make suggestions for improvement.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Workers' wellbeing has been negatively impacted by migration due to various factors like climatic conditions, working conditions, poor sanitation, and inadequate accommodation. They had to work longer hours while battling the sun, cold, heat, rain,

and dust. This study focuses on the work and living conditions of migrant workers and the problems faced by them in the construction sector.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To study the living and working conditions of the migrant labours in the construction sector.
- To study the problems faced by the migrant workers in the construction sector.

METHODOLOGY:

The primary and secondary method of data collection that is questionnaire technique was used to collect the information required. About 100 samples have been collected for the study. The questionnaire consists of personal information, working hours, wage rate etc. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that the respondents were able to express their opinion and ideas freely and frankly.

AREA OF THE STUDY”

This is micro level study. The area selected for the present study was confined migrant workers in the field of construction in Ernakulam district.

SELECTION OF SAMPLE:

The study is based on simple random sample method which comes to 100 samples.

SOURCES OF DATA:

In order to attain the objective of the study, there are two types of data collection method. The primary data was collected from a detailed questionnaire. The secondary data includes books, journals, publications, internet etc.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS:

Statistical tools were used for systematic arrangement and analysis data. The collected data were coded and analyzed by using simple tools like tabulation, diagrams and percentage.

SCOPE OF STUDY:

The scope of study is immense it is named at covering the problems and working conditions of migrated workers in construction sector in Ernakulam.

PERIOD OF STUDY:

All the data are collected during the period 2019-2020.

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY:

The present study conducted is to study the problems and working conditions of migrated workers in construction sector with special reference to the Ernakulam district.

LIMITATIONS:

- Some of the respondents were not willing to reveal their opinions regarding the living and working conditions.
- As many of the workers were from Northern States of India, there was a language barrier.
- Workers were hesitating to speak about themselves and their employer.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

This section attempts a review of the available literature related to the topic.

- According to N. Ajith Kumar (2007). Director, Centre for Socio-economic & Environmental Studies (CSES), Kochi, is a pilot character on domestic immigration in Kerala. He pointed out that the migrant workers receive higher wages than their home country. But they work longer hours and have to bear the high cost of living in Kochi on food, shelter and transportation, so their actual wages may be lower.
- According to Shibu Baby John-Labour Minister of Kerala (2013), The five states of West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, and Orissa account for 75% of DML domestic workers in Kerala. He said DMLS employees work long hours but are not eligible for Social Security payments. They are oblivious to their rights and duties as employees. They are not unionized.

AN OVERVIEW ON MIGRATION OF WORKERS IN CONSTRUCTION FIELD:

Human history is littered with examples of people migrating from one place to another in search of a better life. While some regions and sectors are falling behind in terms of population support, others are catching up, and people are migrating to take advantage of these new opportunities. The gap between rural and urban areas widens as a result of industrialization, as well as a change in the workforce to industrializing areas.

In recent years, Kerala especially in Ernakulam has seen a significant influx of migrant labor from various parts of the region. Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Assam, and other states are now sending workers to Kerala. The district of Ernakulam in Kerala has the most migrants. Professionals and skilled employees make up a small percentage of the total. However, the vast majority of them are unskilled or semi-skilled workers working mainly in construction,

agriculture, hotels, plywood manufacturing, quarries, footwear manufacturing, and other labor-intensive industries and services. The huge influx of migrant labor to the state was caused by a lack of local labor, higher salaries for unskilled laborers in the state, and job opportunities. Construction has emerged as a major economic field in most of the country's large and medium-sized cities over the last few decades. The majority of construction workers are from rural areas, and they have become one of wealth creators in Ernakulam. But the migrant workers' accommodation and working conditions are very pathetic in Ernakulam. The unorganized nature of jobs, the whims of the labor market, the lack of negotiating power of guest employees, inadequate and unsanitary lodging and associated health concerns, a lack of employment protection and social security, and the lack of a support line are all significant issues that must be addressed. The major problems of migrant workers in the construction sector are majority of workers live in slums or rooms in slums, which are shared areas. Some of them remain on storefront verandas. They have restricted access to clean water and sanitary facilities. They contract a variety of diseases as a result of their living conditions. Owing to language barriers, a lack of time, and indifference, they are unable to refer their issues to public health care systems. They work in poor conditions and long working hours is another problem faced by the migrant workers in construction. Workplace fatalities, accidents, and serious injuries are another big issue. The state of security is seldom verified. The first-aid services on the sites aren't very useful. Many incidents result in fatalities, and contractors often attempt to conceal fatalities. Compensation for death or injury is extremely rare. Immigrants are still afforded basic rights under the law.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

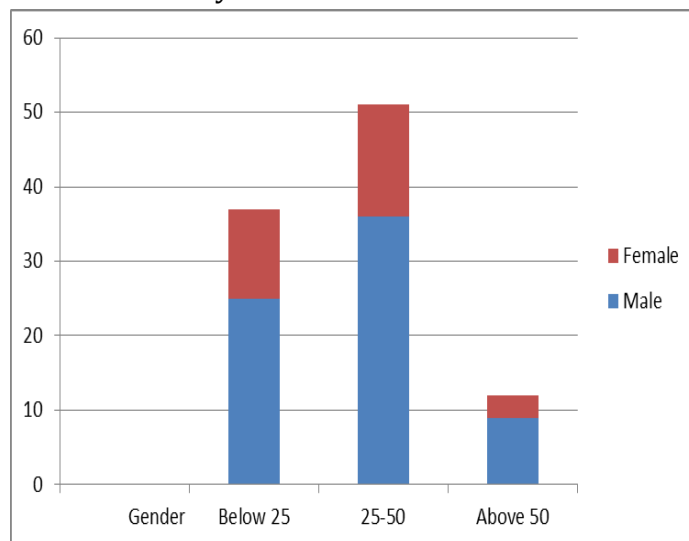
The present chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of collected data. The information is collected through interview schedule from Ernakulam. All the data from primary survey is used for analysis.

AGES AND GENDER WISE CLASSIFICATION:

This table shows the age profile of the respondents in the total sample.

Age \ Gender	Male	Female	Total
Below 25	25	12	37
25-50	36	15	51
Above 50	9	3	12
Total	70	30	100

Source: Primary Source 2019-2020



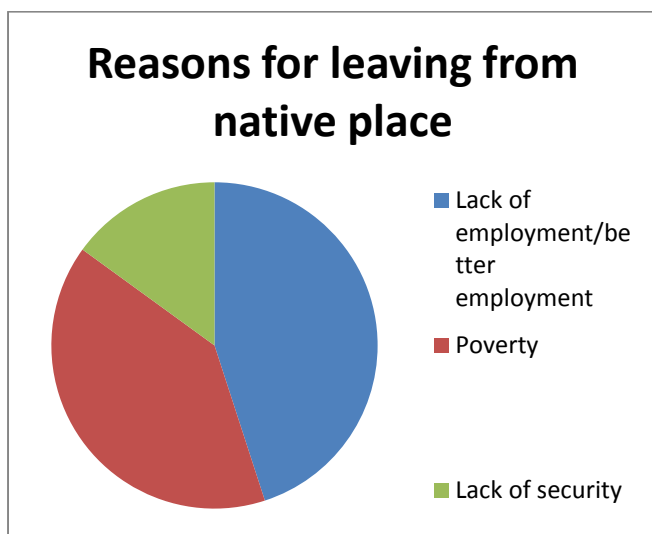
The table shows the age wise classification of respondents in Ernakulam. Majority of respondents are belonging to the age group of 25-50 with 36% of male and 15% of female workers. 25% of male and 12% of female respondents belong to the age group of below 25. Only 9% of male and 3% of female labours belong to the age group above 50. It is clear from the diagram that 70% respondents are male and remaining 30% respondents are female.

REASONS FOR LEAVING NATIVE PLACE:

This table shows the different reasons for leaving the native place.

Reasons	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Lack of employment/better employment	45	45
Poverty	40	40
Lack of security	15	15
Total	100	100

Source : Primary Source 2019-2020



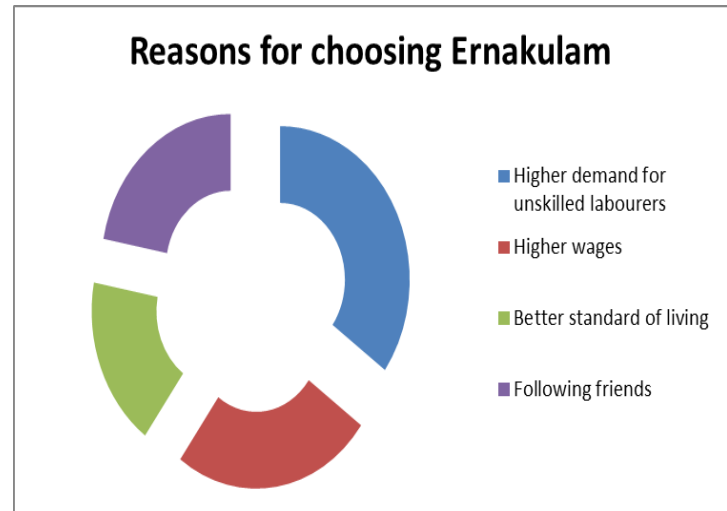
As per the above table, around 45% of the respondents left their native place due to lack of employment and 40% due to poverty and remaining 15% due to lack of security. It is clear from the diagram that the major reason for leaving the native place is due to unemployment.

REASONS FOR CHOOSING ERNAKULAM:

This table shows the different reasons for choosing Ernakulam.

Reasons	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Higher demand for unskilled labourers	35	35
Higher wages	25	25
Better standard of living	18	18
Following friends	22	22
Total	100	100

Source : Primary Source 2019-2020



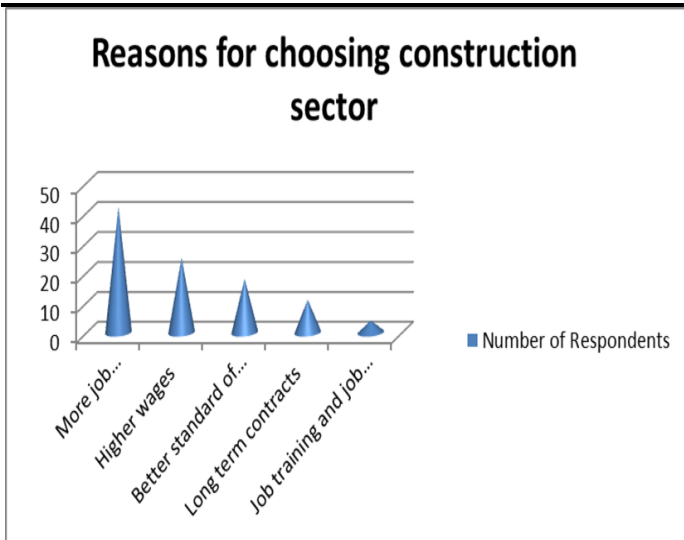
According to the data in the table above, higher demand for unskilled laborers in Kochi is the primary reason for laborers' migration to the Ernakulam district. According to migrant laborers, who make up just 18 percent of the workforce, a higher standard of living is the least important factor.

REASONS FOR CHOOSING CONSTRUCTION SECTOR:

This table shows the different reasons for choosing construction sector.

Reasons	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
More job opportunities	42	42
Higher wages	25	25
Better standard of living	18	18
Long term contracts	11	11
Job training and job orientation	4	4
Total	100	100

Source : Primary Source 2019-2020



As per the above table, it was found that 42% respondents belong to more job opportunities. Around 25% of the respondents consider higher wage rate and 18% of respondents constitutes better standard of living. Around 11% of respondents belong to long term contract. As per the table the least influenced reason is job training and orientation.

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION:

Findings: It is found from the study that,

- Majority of the respondents belongs to the age group of 25 to 50 and below 25 which constitutes 51% and 37% respectively. Majority of the male and female migrant labourers belongs to the age group of 25-50.
- Around 45% of the respondents left their native place due to lack of employment. 40% due to poverty and remaining 15% due to lack of security.
- It can be concluded that higher demand for the unskilled labourers in Kochi is the dominant reason for choosing this district by the labourers to migrate. Out of the total population 35% of the respondents are of this opinion. Better standard of living is the least considered reason as per the migrant labourers which constitute only 18%.

- It was found that more job opportunity is the most influential reason for choosing construction industry by the migrant labourers and it constitutes 42% out of the total respondents.
- Nearly 39% of the migrant labourers are sharing a room with more than 12 roommates. It is followed by 42% ranging 4 to 8 persons, 8 to 12 of 16 % and the minimum number of persons in a room is in between 2 to 4 which constitute only 3% out of the total respondents.

SUGGESTIONS:

- The government should take the requisite steps to educate migrant workers about their rights and obligations.
- Authorities must enforce strict measures or laws to ensure safe and secure working conditions for workers.
- The government, a trade union, or labor contractors take appropriate steps to improve the living conditions of migrant workers and those who live in residential housing.

CONCLUSION:

The project study entitled “The Problems and Working Conditions of Migrated Workers in Construction Sector: A Study with Special Reference to Ernakulam”. The study will assist the authorities and the government in improving the working and living conditions of unskilled migrant workers. Although employees have the right to emigrate in search of a better life, it is critical that the government honors its obligations to its people by providing workers with a basic level of social security. In-migration is expected to increase in the coming years, owing to signs of rapid growth in the economy and an increase in activities, especially in the infrastructure and construction sectors. Various languages for improving migrant worker working conditions,

awareness campaigns on the rights and laws that protect immigrants, improving housing facilities and living conditions of migrant workers, and so on are some of the various guidelines for improving the living and working conditions of migrant workers.

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