LABOUR MIGRATION TO KERALA- A CASE STUDY OF PAIPPAD VILLAGE IN KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

Pranaya S Kumar

Sree Gokulam House, P C Kavala PO, Paippad, Vellappally,
Kottayam (District), Kerala-686537, India

ABSTRACT

In this paper, the socio economic living situation of the migrant workers in Kerala have been analysed. The income before and after migration and nature of work have been considered for 100 migrant workers of Paippad Panchayat in Kottayam district of Kerala. Long distance migration Has been a trend in the migration to Kerala. Poor economic situation in native states along with lack of employment opportunities has been the motive behind the migration. High wages and better employment opportunities made them to choose Kerala. The study shows that migration has helped them to attain a better standard of living.

Keywords: Migration, Workers, Kerala, Living Condition, High Wages

INTRODUTION

Migration has been a major characteristic of every developing and under developed country. It could be both external and internal migration. As far as Kerala, a state in India is concerned, it experiences both external and internal migration. People of Kerala is migration to other countries and people from other states are migration to Kerala. At the same time high wages, rapid urbanization and shortage of skilled workers make Kerala attractive destinations for migrant labourers. The vacuum created by the scarcity of local skilled labour makes room for them. Employers also prefer workers from other states as they demand wages much lower than that of their native counterparts. It is in this context a study is proposed on the dynamics of casual labour market in Kerala. As Kottayam is one of the districts where there is a heavy influx of casual migrant labourers and more precisely the work examines the nature of work, wages and income level, savings and consumption pattern, living conditions, sources and reasons of migration to Kerala, and the flow of remittances and its impact on local economy.

METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive in nature. It is based primarily on a sample survey conducted among migrant workers in Paippad Panchayat in Kottayam district of Kerala. The selection of Paippad

Panchayat is based on the concentration of migrant workers in different construction sites of the district. Study is conducted with a limited sample size of 100 migrant workers. The survey was conducted by visiting both the places (either working sites or residence) whichever found convenient. The data collection was carried out during the month of January, 2017. The study covers migrants working on regular contract basis and casual workers, seeking job on day to day basis. The sample survey was supplemented by in-depth interviews with a few migrant workers, employers, local labourers and the Civil Police Officer in charge under the Thrickodithanam Police Station for the collection of biodata of migrant workers in Paippad Panchayat. The secondary data was taken from the district and state level official websites of National Sample Survey report, Census reports and annual reports of "Ministry of Labour & Employment", Government of India. The socio-economic condition of the migrants has been explained by analysing various migration characteristics such as demographic characteristics, nature of work, skill level, wages and income level, living conditions, consumption pattern, and remittances, etc using the statistical tools of graphs, bars, pie diagrams, charts etc.

1. Age wise classification of the Migrants

Age plays a prominent role in undertaking any economic activity. Age groups between 15-59 are considered as economically active population. It is also an important factor for analysis of labour force participation. The economic development and prosperity of any region largely depends on the demographic composition and quality of its people.
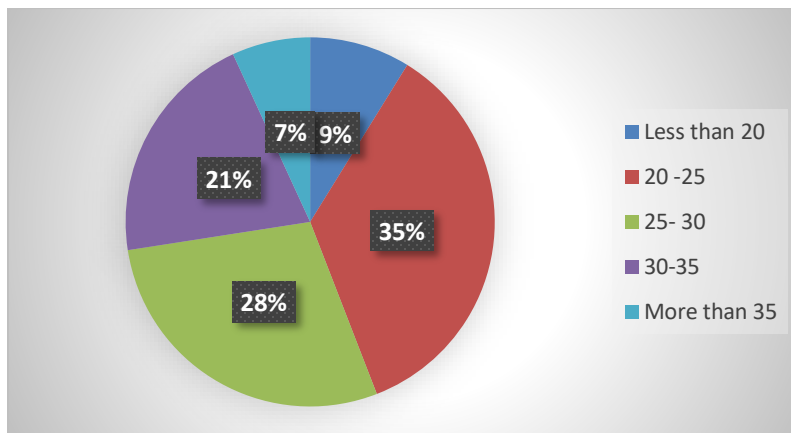
Table 1: Age wise classification of the Migrants

Age (in years)	Number of migrants	Percentage Share
Less than 20	9	9
20 -25	36	36
25- 30	29	29
30-35	21	21

More than 35	7	7
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 1: Age wise classification of the migrants

Source: Primary Data

The age wise classification of the migrants reveal that majority of them (65 percent) in the sample are in the age group of 20-30 years followed by a 21 percent of migrants in the age group of 30-35 years and 9 percent and 7 percent in the age group of less than 20 years and more than 35 years respectively. Major share of migrants within 20-30 years reflects that job searching youth are more concentrated in migration to other states, revealing the high prevalence of lack of job opportunities in their native states.

2. State wise classification of the Migrants

India is a vast country with different states. An attempt has made to know the native states from where the workers have migrated. Table 4.3 analysis the sources or the native places of migrants.

Table 2: State Profile of the migrants

States	Number of migrants	Percentage Share
West Bengal	86	86
Bihar	9	9
Assam	5	5
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 2: State profile of the migrants
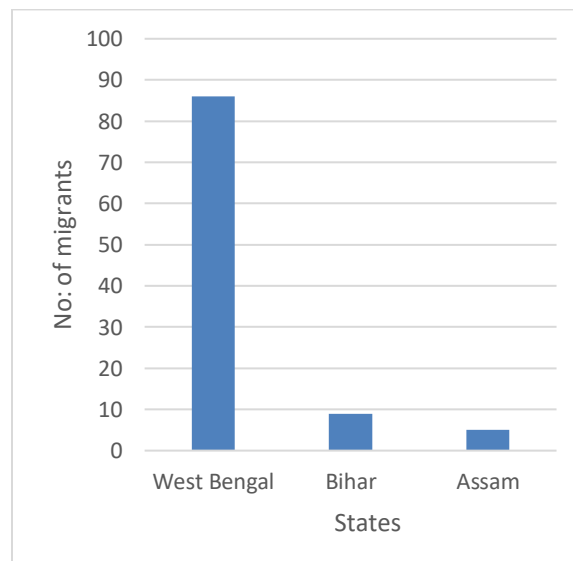
Source: Primary Data

As shown in the table, 86% of the sample size belongs to West Bengal followed by 9% from Bihar and 5% from Assam. Among the West Bengal migrants, majority of them come from

Malda district which is identified as one of the most industrially backward districts in India .But the employers are interested to get the workers when they are needed and not concerned about their place of origin.

3. Languages known by the Migrants

Language is an effective factor to migrate. Mostly people migrate to similar language spoken places. But sometimes economic needs forces people to search for their job even to far away places. Migration to Kerala, a non hindi state is an example for it. Table 5 shows the different languages known by the migrant workers.
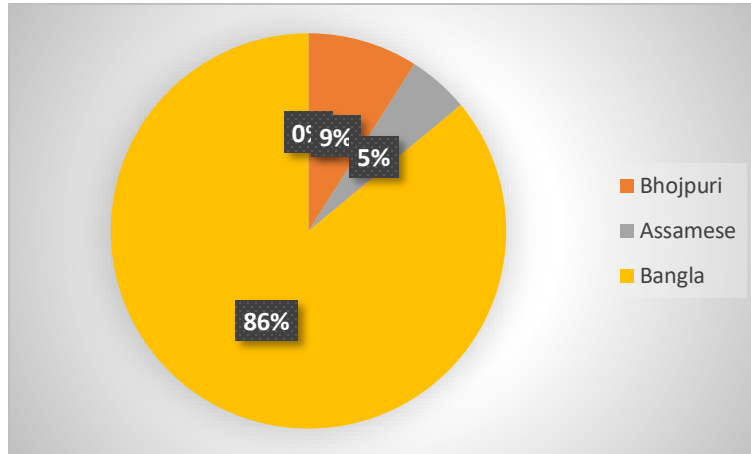
Table 3: Languages known by the migrants

Languages	Number of migrants
Hindi	100
Bangla	86
Bhojpuri	9
Assamese	5

Note: Multiple Response Question

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3: Languages known by the migrants other than Hindi

Source: Primary Data

All the migrant workers under study have a common language Hindi along with their local language. Since Bengali migrants are majority, other than Hindi, Bengali (86 percent) is the second most spoken language among the migrants, followed by Bhojpuri (9%) and Assamese (5%).

4. Category wise classification of the Migrants

Occupational relations in Indian villages have been traditionally determined by caste. Members of higher castes generally owned land and controlled the production and distribution of food and allocation of services, while those of lower castes were primarily tenants of agricultural labourers rendering services to the members of higher castes. It is usually the low caste groups who tend to migrate more.
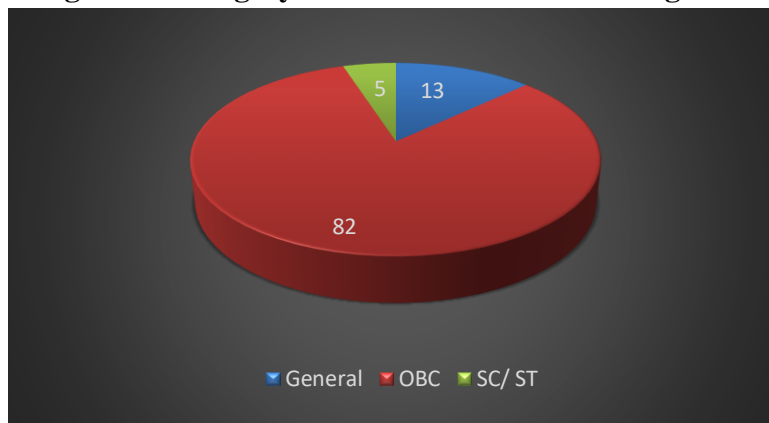
Table 4: Category of the respondents

Category	Number of Migrants	Percentage Share
General	13	13
OBC	82	82

SC/ ST	5	15
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 4: Category wise distribution of the Migrants

Source: Primary Data

Out of the 100 migrant workers under study, 82% belongs to Other Backward Classes (OBC) followed by 13% migrants from General category and 5% from Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST). Majority of the OBC population is because of the large number of migrants from Muslim community.

5. Educational Level of the Migrants

Education empowers labourers with higher bargaining power and competition. It helps workers to be free from exploitation. Literacy is one among several indicators of educational development. It is capable of transforming the existence order of defining the aims and objectives of an authentic human resource development.

Table 5: Educational level of the Migrants

Educational Level	Number of Migrants	Percentage Share
Not attended school	11	11
Primary Education	34	34
Upper Primary Education	53	53
Secondary Education	2	2
Higher Secondary Education	0	0
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 5: Educational Level of the migrants
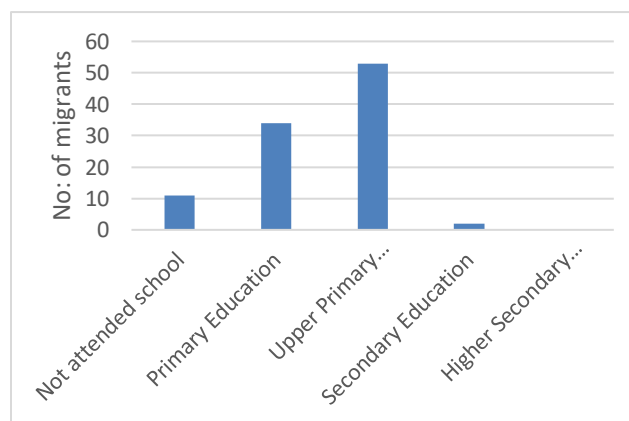
Source: Primary Data

Out of the 100 migrants under study, majority of migrants (53%) have completed their education till Upper Primary level (upto class VIII) only. Primary level education (upto class IV) has been done by 34 % of migrants. Only 2 % of migrants have completed their Secondary level education (upto class X). None of them have done Higher Secondary Level education. Around 11 % of migrants haven't attended school also. The above information reflects the the low level of education, high droupout percentage and low standard of living among the migrants. The low level of education makes them fit for unskilled works only.

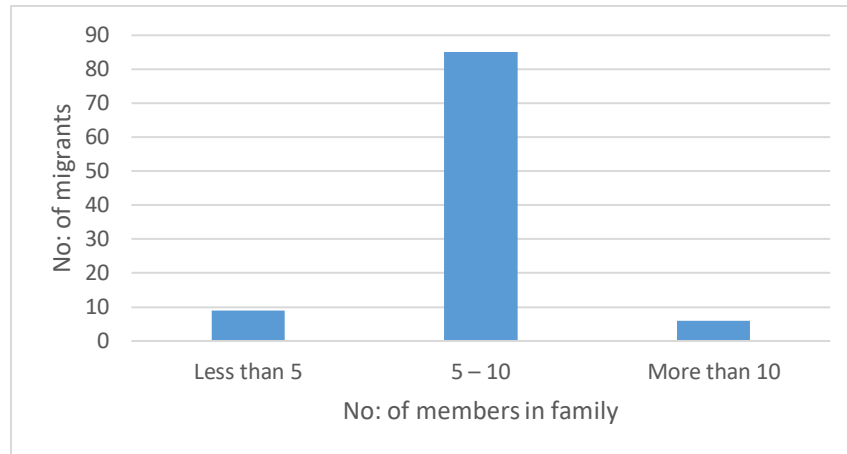## 6. Family size of the Migrants

The size of the household plays an important role in determining the employment in which people try to find employment somewhere even for lower wages. It is therefore essential to understand the family size of the workers.

Table 6: Family size of Migrants

Number of family members	Number of Migrants	Percentage Share
Less than 5	9	9
5 – 10	85	85
More than 10	6	6
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 6: Family size of the Migrants

Source: Primary Data

The size of the family plays an important role in determining the employments in which people try to find employment somewhere else even for lower wages. The table on the size of the family of the migrants show that majority of them (85%) are having five to ten members in their family, mostly consisting of parents, their siblings and their spouse. 9% of the migrants are having less than 5 members and only 6% of them are having more than 10 members in their family.

7. Occupational Status before Migration

Occupation status before migration is an important factor in determining migration. It is the monetary inadequacy in the previous employment makes people to migrate.
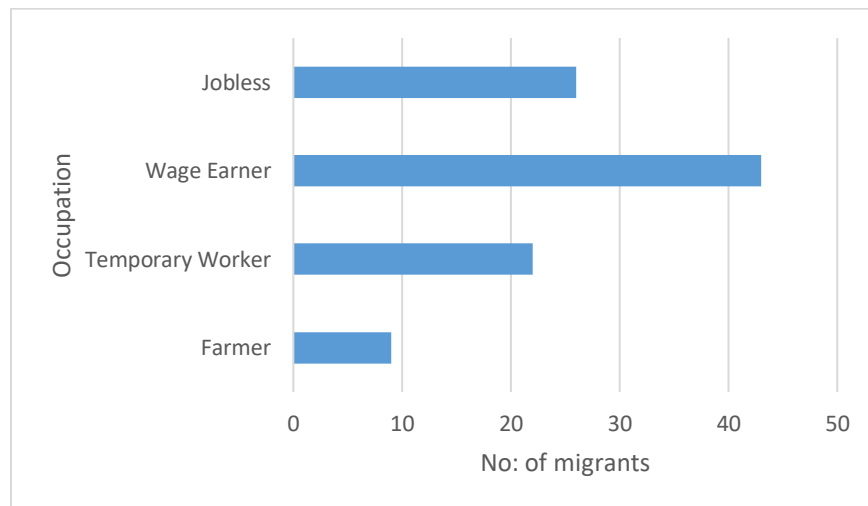
Table 7: Occupational status of the migrants before migration

Particulars	Number of Migrants	Percentage Share
Farmer	9	9
Temporary Worker	22	22
Wage Earner	43	43

Jobless	26	26
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 7: Occupation of migrants before migration

Source: Primary Data

Out of the 100 migrants under study, 9% of them were working as farmers, who were from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. 22% were involved as temporary workers, farm labourers are also included in the category of temporary workers as their work lasted for only few weeks or few months.43% of them were wage earners on daily basis and 26% were jobless (working as helpers with family members but not being paid).

8. Type of present work

Access to occupation not only determines the available employment and income potential of an individual but also indicates his social status as well which can be classified into permanent, temporary and casual workers. Occupational structure reflects the diversification of employment and income sources, it is also instrumental for capturing the relative potential for economic diversification among rural groups.

Table 8: Type of present work

Type of present wok	Number of Migrants	Percentage Share
Permanent	20	20
Temporary	15	15
Casual	65	65
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 8: Types of present work
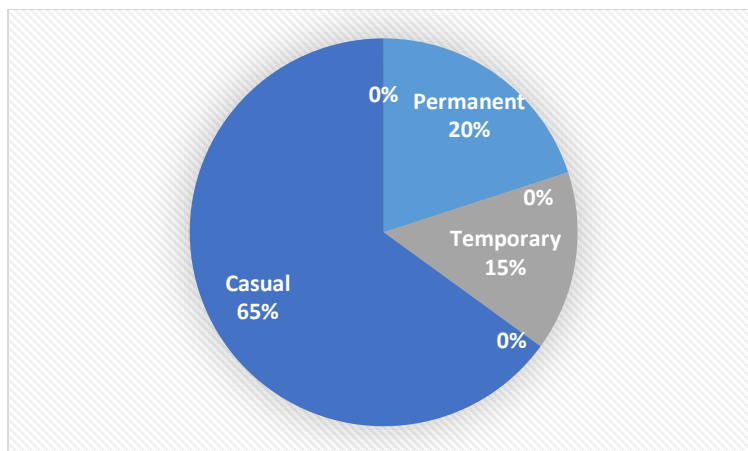
Source: Primary Data

On the basis of the study among 100 samples, at present 20% of them work as permanent workers under some contractors whereas 15% are employed only since few weeks or few months or only for some specific works. The rest 65% of migrants are casual workers who are employed on daily basis.

9. Nature of work

Lack of skill acquisition has been identified as one of the important factor of unemployment in relation to the high population growth. Skilled or unskilled determines the nature of work in the employment sector.

Table 9: Nature of work

Particulars	Number of migrants	Percentage Share
Skilled	23	23
Unskilled	77	77
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 9: Nature of Work
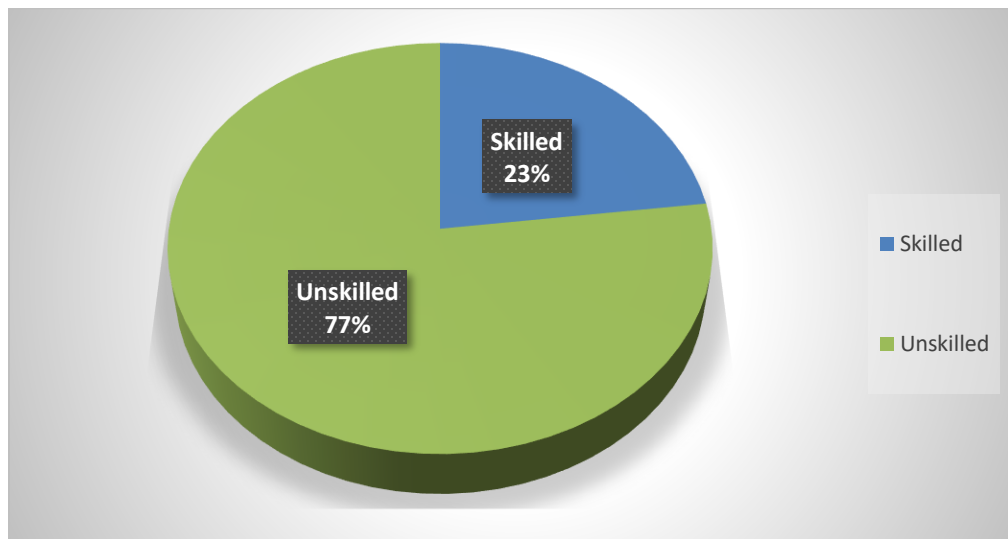
Source: Primary Data

Out of the 100 mirants under study, only 23% of the workers are skilled and the rest 77% of them are unskilled workers. The skilled workers are employed either under contracters or as temporary workers. It is observed that majority of the casual workers are unskilled.

10. Duration of work

Duration of work is an important determinant of labour productivity. Mostly, the migrant workers are exploited with long hours of work. Table 4.13 finds out the hours of per day work by the migrant workers.

Table 10: Hours of work per day

Hours of work	Number of migrants	Percentage Share
Less than 8 hours	11	11
8 - 10 hours	52	52
More than 10 hours	37	37
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 10: Hours of work per day
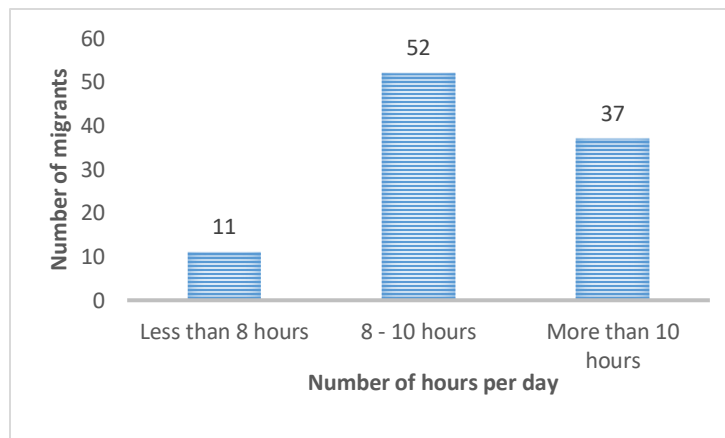
Source: Primary Data

The number of hours of work per day is eight. Only 11% of workers have reported of working less than eight hours. More than half of the workers under study(52%) works for eight to ten hours a day. 37% of them work for more than ten hours a day.37% includes permanent and temporary workers under contractors.
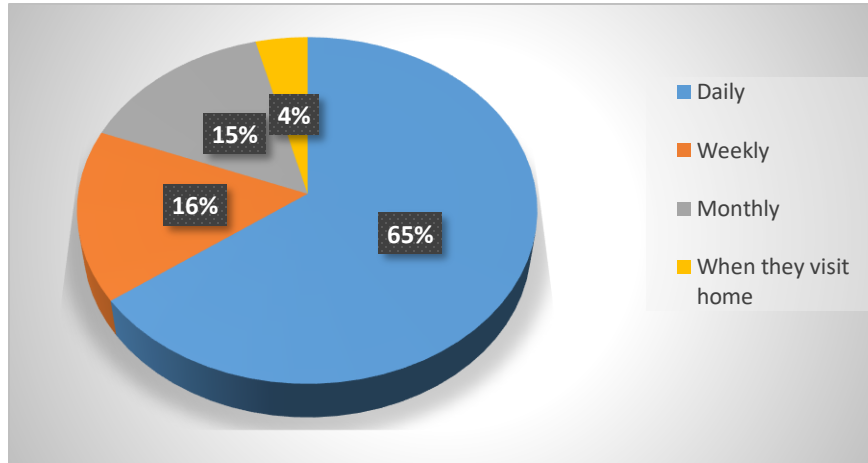
11. Payment of wages

The rate of wages paid to the different types of construction workers depends on a multitude of factors like demand and fluctuations in the market, seasonal nature of employment, unregulated nature of the contractual relations etc.

Table 11: Payment of wages

Payment of wages	Number of migrants	Percentage Share
Daily	65	65
Weekly	16	16
Monthly	15	15
When they visit home	4	4
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 11: Payment of wages

Source: Primary Data

Frequency of payment of wages is analysed in the table. The casual workers are paid on daily basis. The temporary and permanent workers are paid on weekly (16%) and monthly (15%) basis. For 4% of the workers, who work permanently under some contractors, large share of their wages are paid when they visit home.

12. Wages earned per day

Wages earned per day shows the economic benefit they gain out of migration. Table 12 reflects the wages earned by the migrant workers per day.
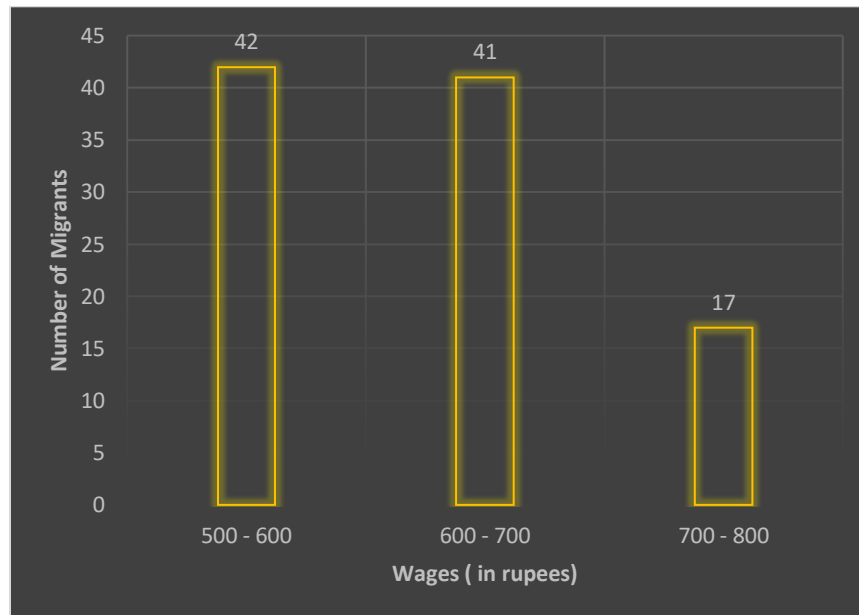
Table 12: Wages earned per day

Wages (in rupees)	Number of migrants	Percentage Share
500 – 600	42	42
600 – 700	41	41
700 – 800	17	17

Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 12: Wages earned per day by the Migrants

Source: Primary Data

The above data analyses the wages earned by the migrant workers in Kerala. It reveals that 42% of workers earns Rs 500 to Rs 600 per day. Rs 600 to Rs700 is earned by 41% of workers under study. 17% earns Rs 700 to Rs800 each day.

13. Monthly income from employment

In this table, we analyses the economic benefit enjoyed by the workers after migration. It is studied by finding out the income level of the workers before and after migration.

Table 13: Monthly Income from employment

Income (in rupees)	Number of respondents (before migration)	Percentage Share (before migration)	Number of respondents (after migration)	Percentage Share (after migration)
1000 - 5000	86	86	0	0
5000 – 10,000	14	14	18	18
10,000 – 15,000	0	0	59	59
15,000 & above	0	0	23	23

Source: Primary Data

Figure 13: Monthly income from employment
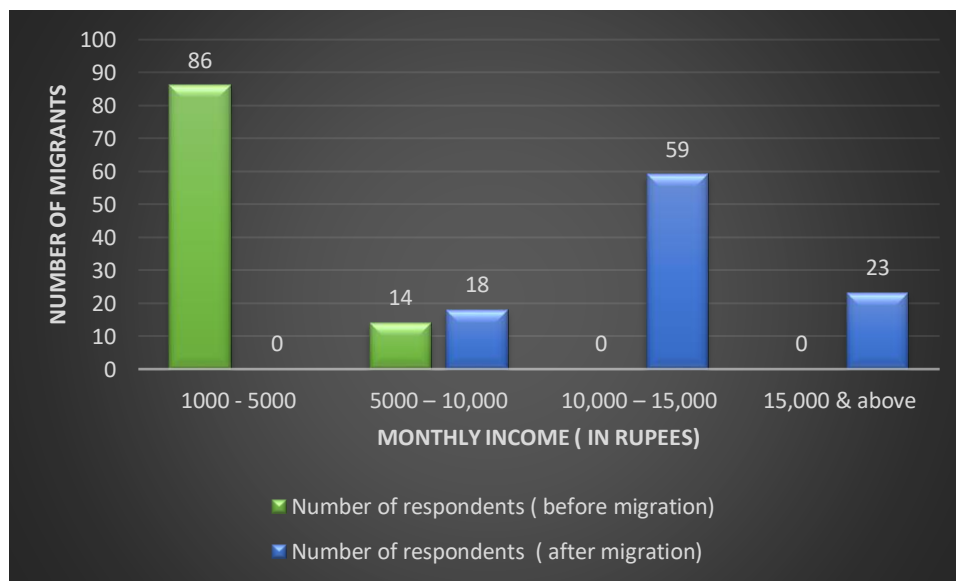
Source: Primary Data

The table reveals the income earned by the migrant workers under study before and after migration. Before migration,86% of workers earned between Rs 1000 to Rs 5000 and 14% of workers earned between Rs 5000 to Rs 10000. None of the workers earned more than Rs 10000 in their hometown. After migration everyone is earning more than Rs 5000.18% of workers are earning from Rs 5000 to Rs 10000.59% and 23% of workers are earning Rs 10000 to Rs 15000

and more than Rs 15000 respectively. The data highlights higher wages as one of the reason for migration.

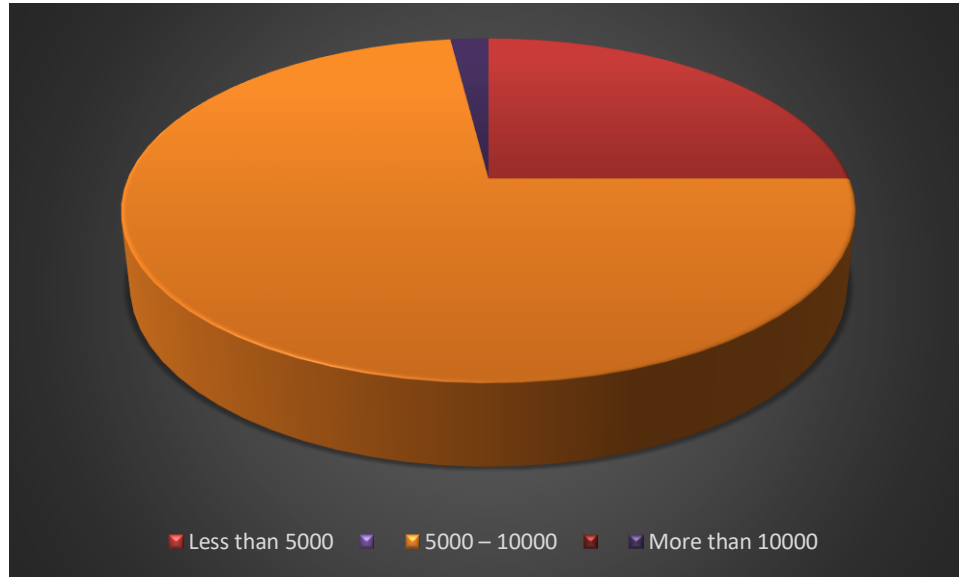**14. Monthly expenditure of Migrants**

The monthly expenditure of the migrant workers are analysed in the table below.

Table 14: Monthly expenditure of respondents

Expenditure (in rupees)	Number of migrants	Percentage Share
Less than 5000	25	25
5000 – 10000	73	73
More than 10000	2	2
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 14: Monthly expenditure of respondents

Source: Primary Data

The data reveals the monthly expenditure of the migrant workers. 25 percent reports that their monthly expenditure is below Rs5000, while majority of workers under study comes under the expenditure of Rs5000 – Rs10000.

15. Possession of agricultural land in hometown

Possession of agricultural land in the hometown is an indicator of other sources of income other than the remittance in the migrant household.

Table 15: Possession of agricultural land in hometown

Particulars	No: of migrants	Percentage Share
Yes	9	9
No	91	91
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 15: Possession of agricultural land in hometown
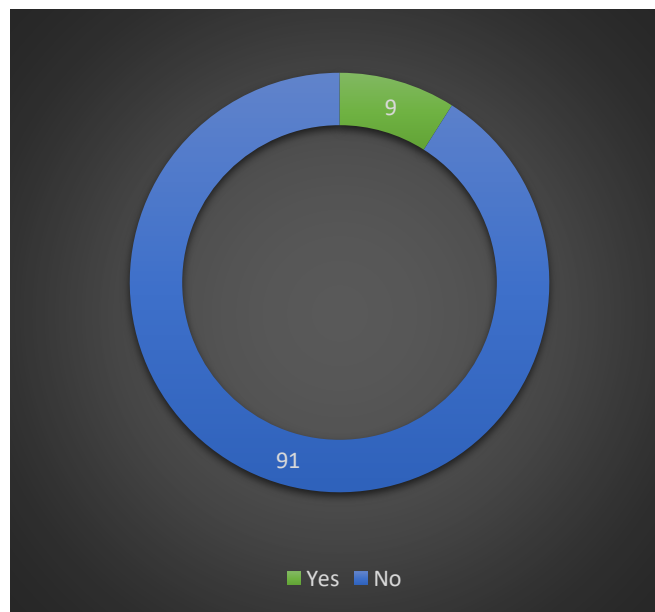
Source: Primary Data

Only 9 migrant workers own agricultural land in their native place. It is observed that these 9 workers hails from Bihar and the rest 91 workers do not own agricultural land.

16. Reasons for Migration

The most common important reason for voluntary migration is economic. Better economic opportunities attract the labourers to move from one place to another.

Table 16: Reasons for migration

Reasons	Number of migrants	Percentage Share
To get rid of debt	64	33
Lack of job opportunities	58	26
Poor economic condition of family	46	23
Higher wages in Kerala	82	18
Total		100

Note: Multiple Response Question
Source: Primary Data

Figure 16: Reasons for migration
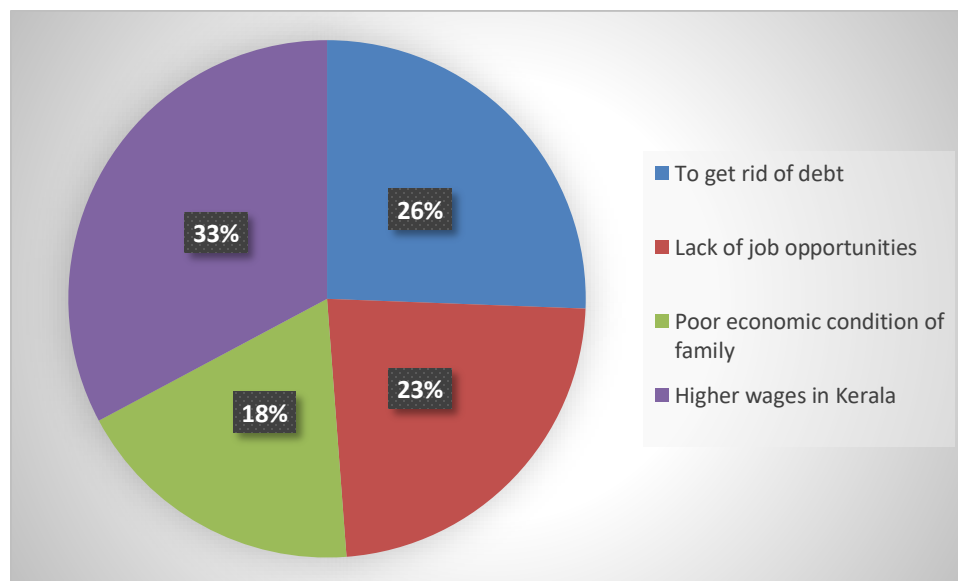
Source: Primary Data

The reasons behind the migration is one of the important factor of the study. 33 percent of the migrant workers reveal that they migrated to get rid of the debt while 26 percent reacted that it is the lack of job opportunities in the native state that made them to migrate. Poor economic condition of the family accounts for 23 percent of workers to migrate and higher wages in Kerala has been the migration reason for 18 percent of workers.
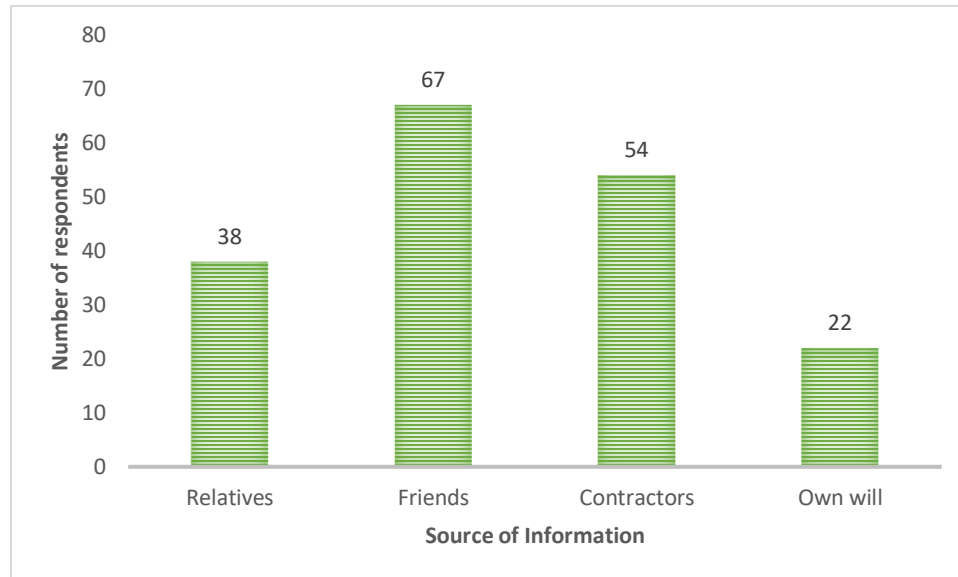
17. Sources of information for migration

Sources of information for migration has been analysed to know the different channels of information available to them. Mostly, it is through the friends, relatives, contractors etc.

Table 17: Sources of information for migration

Source of information	No: of migrants	Percentage Share
Relatives	38	21
Friends	67	37
Contractors	54	30
Own will	22	12
Total		100

Note: Multiple Response Question
Source: Primary Data

Figure 17: Sources of information for migration

Source: Primary Data

The above table reveals the data on the source of information for the migrant workers about the job opportunities in Kerala.21 percent considers relatives as the source of information and 37 percent considers friends as their source of information. Contractors are the source of information for 30 percent of workers while 12 percent migrated on their own will. In a nut shell, friends and relatives together is the main source of information for the workers to migrate.

18. Nature of savings

Most of the income earned by the respondents has been spent on household item, education of their children or in fulfilling their basic necessities like food, food grains, health treatment, emergencies etc, after meeting these expenses a very meagre amount only was left with the respondents for savings. Savings is an important channel for wealth accumulation and it is an prime indicator of one's economic prosperity and stability.

Table 18: Nature of savings

Institutions	No: of migrants	Percentage Share
Bank	46	46
Post Office	32	32
Local Chit fund	14	14
No savings	8	8
Total	100	100

Figure 18: Nature of Savings
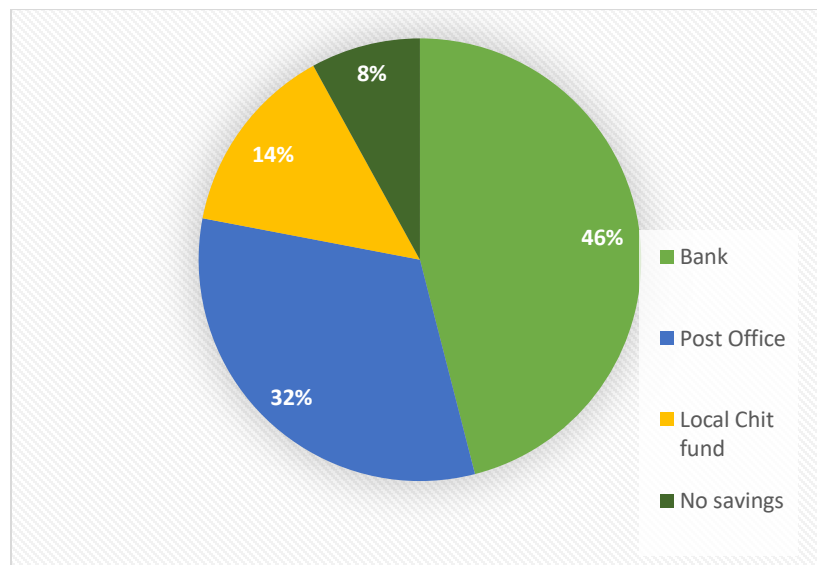
Source: Primary Data

Out of the 100 migrants under study, 46 percent reported that they save in banks while 32 percent have their savings in post office mostly in their native place. Local chit fund is another channel of savings for 14 percent and 8 percent of workers reported that they do not have any savings in any of the institution.
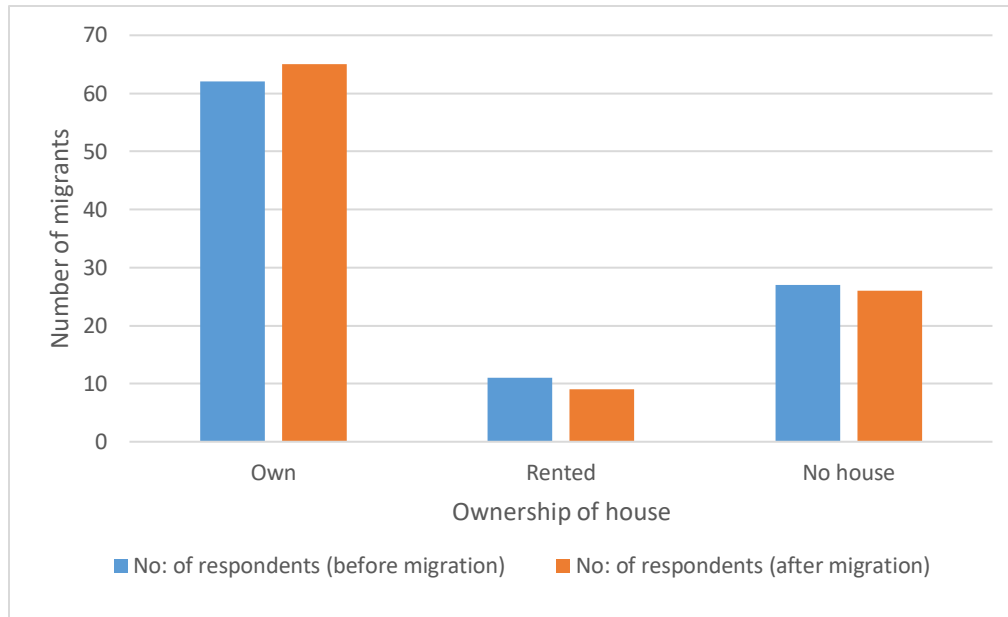
19. Ownership of house

Remittances from out migration have a favourable impact on the living status of the respondents. An enquiry into the ownership of house which the respondents had acquired before and after migration is explained here.

Table 19: Ownership of house before and after migration

Ownership of house	No: of migrants (before migration)	Percentage Share (before migration)	No: of migrants (after migration)	Percentage Share (after migration)
Own	62	62	65	65
Rented	11	11	9	9
No house	27	27	26	26
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 19: Ownership of house before and after migration

Source: Primary Data

The data on the ownership of own house by the migrants reveal that migration have not economically benefitted in the construction of house.62 percent owned house before migration itself and only three more workers were able to construct house out of the benefits of migration.

## 20. Additional benefits provided by the employer

The table reveals the additional benefits that migrant workers get from their employer apart from their income. It is clearly visible that the migrant workers are exploited in terms of the benefits because very few workers have access access to only some of the benefits that the employers are supposed to provide. Apart from the wage differential, exclusion of these benefits help the employers to employ migrant workers than local workers.

Table 20: Additional benefits provided by the employers

Benefits	No: of migrants	Percentage Share
Bonus	5	8
Cloth	0	0
Advance Payment	9	14
Medical Benefit	11	17
Welfare Fund	0	0
Free Food	0	0
Festive Allowance	6	10
Free rent	24	38
Income for emergency	8	13

Note: Multiple Choice Question

Source: Primary Data

Figure 20: Additional benefits provided by the employers
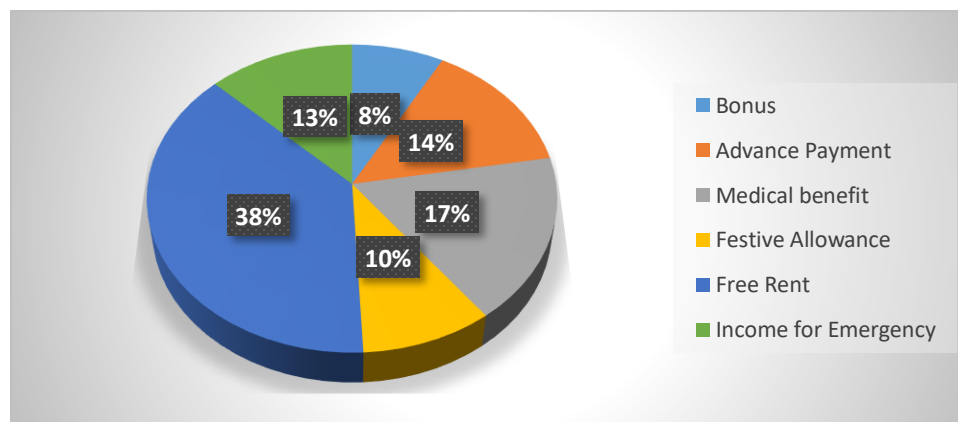
Source: Primary Data

Out of the study of 100,only 8 percent have access to bonus,10 percent to festive allowance, 13 percent to income for emergency,14 percent to advance payment, 17 percent to medical benefit and 38percent to free rent. None of the 100 migrant workers under study have access to welfare fund, cloth facility and free food.

21. Benefits of migration

Migration has far reaching impact not only on the migrants but also on the families back in the villages. The workers reported that they found their lives more satisfying after migration. As now they were able to earn and save more money, which they could send as remittances to

their families in their villages. The migrants admitted that due to migration their economic and social status in their native villages has improved.

Table 21: Benefits enjoyed by the migrants after migration

Benefits	No: of migrants	Percentage Share
Helped in repaying debt	48	23
Improved standard of living	23	11
Helped in buying assets	24	12
To meet emergencies	69	34
Better status in family	41	20
Total		100

Note: Multiple Response Question

Source: Primary Data

Figure 21: Benefits enjoyed by the migrants after migration
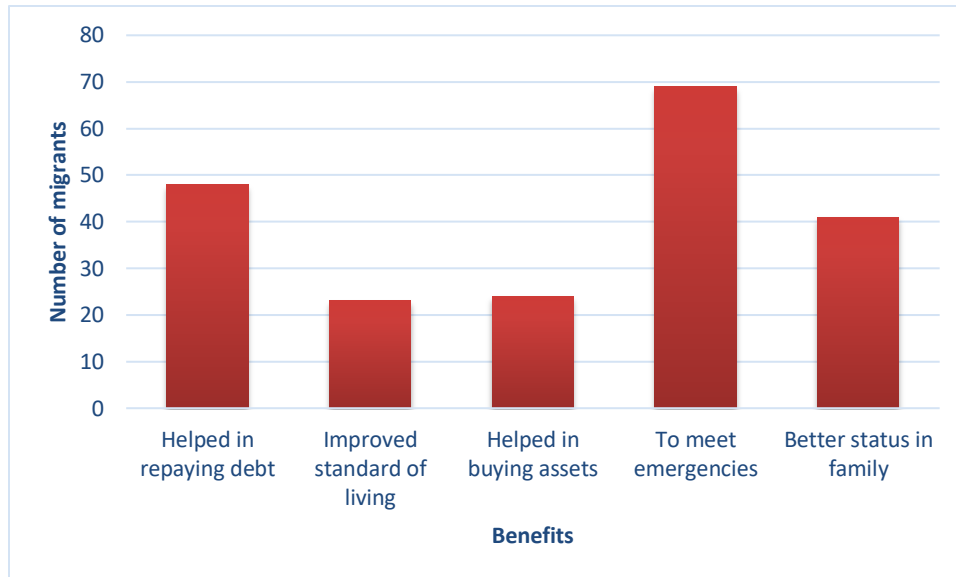
Source: Primary Data

The data reveals that the migration had helped them to be in the better economic situation.48 percent were able to repay the debt, 23 percent got their standard of living improved, 24 percent were able to buy assets.69 percent reported that they were able to meet emergency situation economically and 41 percent achieved better status in family.

## 22. Extent of satisfaction by the Migrants

Satisfaction or dissatisfaction level of the migrant workers in the job gives their sustainability in migrated place. Until unless they are satisfied with the present job, the very reason of migration seems meaningless.

Table 22: Extent of satisfaction by the migrants

Extent of satisfaction	No: of migrants	Percentage Share
Highly satisfied	26	26
Satisfied	61	61
Dissatisfied	5	5
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 22: Extent of satisfaction by the migrants
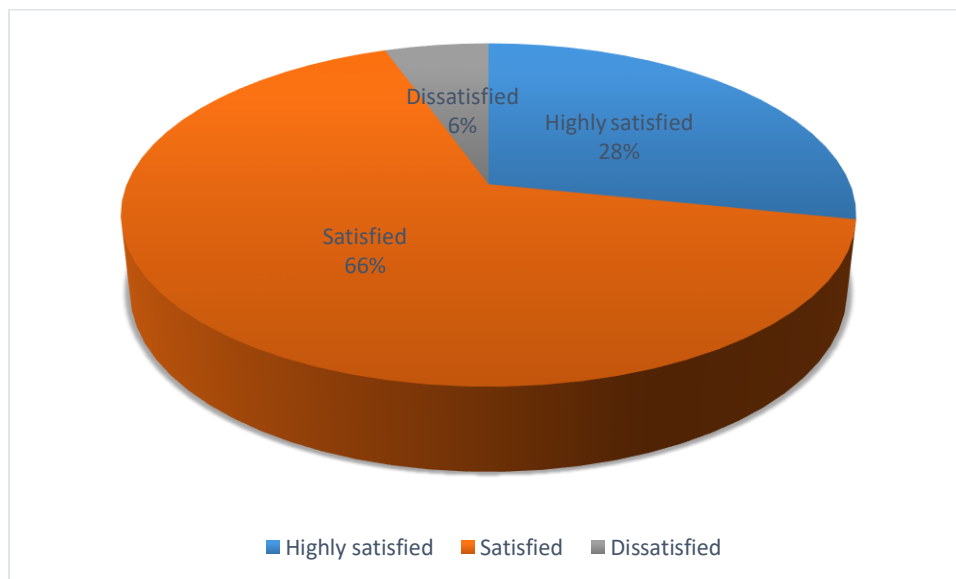
Source: Primary Data

The table shows the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the migrant workers in their job.26 percent reported that they are highly satisfied while 61 percent reported that they are satisfied with their work. Only as few as 5 percent showed dissatisfaction towards their work.

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23. Reasons for satisfaction of job

The reasons for the satisfaction of job for migrant workers has been identified in the table below.

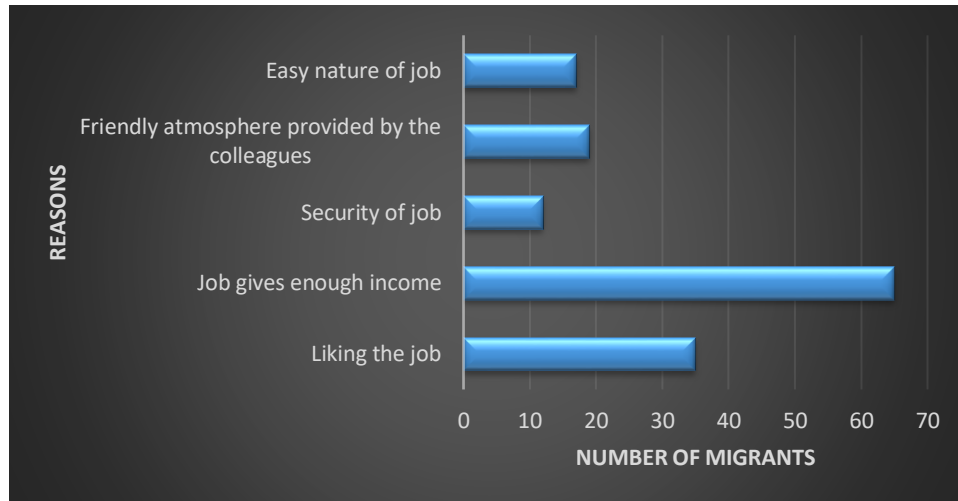**Table 23: Reasons for the satisfaction of job**

Reasons	No: of migrants	Percentage Share
Liking the job	35	24
Job gives enough income	65	44
Security of job	12	8
Friendly atmosphere provided by the colleagues	19	13
Easy nature of job	17	11
Total		100

Note: Multiple Response Question

Source: Primary Data

Figure 23: Reasons for the satisfaction of job

Source: Primary Data

The data revealed the reasons for the satisfaction of job among the migrant workers.35 percent likes the job, 65 percent says that job provides enough income. Security of job is the reason for 12 percent of workers to like the job.19 percent likes the friendly atmosphere provided by the colleagues.

24. Problems faced by the Migrants

Identified problems faced by the migrants are listed in the table below.
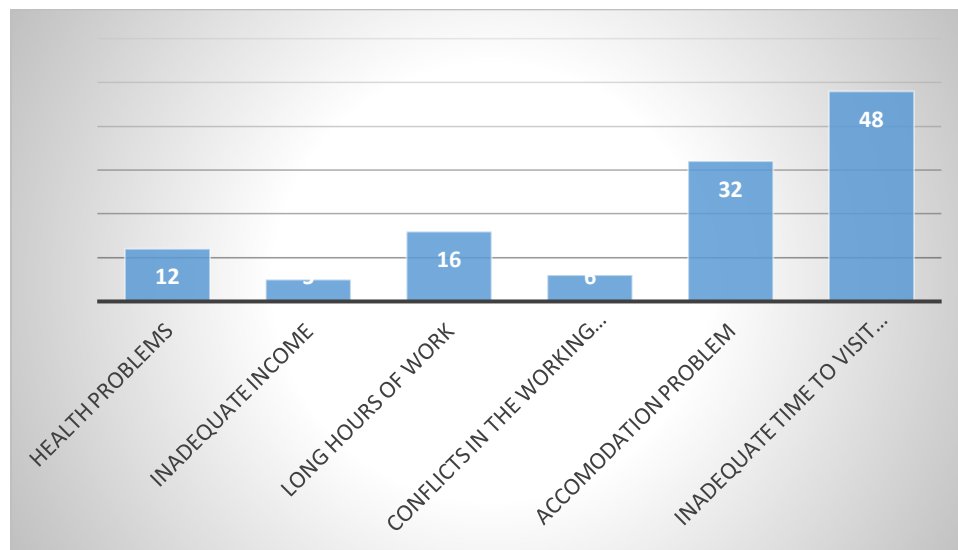
Table 24: Problems faced by the migrants

	No: of migrants	Percentage Share
Health Problems	12	6
Inadequate Income	5	3
Long hours of work	16	9
Conflicts in the	6	3

working place		
Accomodation Problem	32	17
Inadequate time to visit home	48	26
Long distance from home	68	36

Note: Multiple Response Question
Source: Primary Data

Figure 24: Problems faced by the migrants

Source: Primary Data

The problems faced by the migrant workers are reflected in the data.12 percent of workers under study faces health problems, 5 percent says that income is inadequate, 16 percent complaints about the long hours of work, 6 percent reports about the conflicts in the working place. The major problems reported are the long distance from home, inadequate time to visit home and the accommodation problem by the 68 percent, 48 percent and the 32 percent of the workers under study.

CONCLUSION

Thus to conclude it is clear that the living condition of the migrant workers to Kerala have improved a lot .Their standard of living in terms of higher wages and more consumption expenditures indicates a better living condition both in their native land and at the place where they are living. Migration have helped them to get economically better off and socially more acceptable.

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