1. Introduction

The flow of economically active persons for the purposes of employment is supposed to be the predominant form of contemporary international migration. The past few decades have seen massive departure from less developed nations to the more developed ones, usually for employment, higher earnings, more freedom and better quality of life. Although not all migration has been purely economic in motivation, nor has it been voluntary, nevertheless massive migration has profound implications both for the supplier and the host country.

With the globalisation of the economy, the interdependence of the economies has been blurred to a degree never seen before. At a time when new borders are emerging and barriers between nations are collapsing, we notice a veritable thirst among the peoples. In the wake of globalisation of the economy and aftermath of the cold war, we are swamped in the multicultural pursuits and discourses which assume the emergence of a New World Order.

The characteristic feature of labour in India is its migratory character. Therefore, migration of labour assumes great significance in the Indian economy. Migration is thought to be the consequence of unequal development where in people from ‘backward’ regions move to ‘developed’ regions. These developed regions may either be prosperous rural areas or the expanding urban areas where the people from the regions of less employment and income opportunities flock.
Introduction

During the last few decades activities related to construction have emerged as an important economic sector in most large and medium-sized urban centres in the country. Since the early fifties a sizeable proportion of the aggregate investment in India has most seemingly been going to construction. Most workers in the construction sector come from the rural areas. While a part of this labour force is floating and move to these sectors seasonally, a group develops a long-time association with the industry that makes it more or less settled in urban centres and also significantly dependent upon it. Often such groups come from the categories of landless or marginal agricultural labourers and farmers who get trapped into compromising between subsistence wages in urban areas and marginalised situation in rural areas. Their growing dependence on the sector compels them to move from one employer to another or from one work-site to another.

Migration has provided the single most dynamic factor in the otherwise dismal scenario of Kerala in the last quarters of the twentieth century. It is one of the positive outcomes of the Kerala Model of Development. The role of foreign remittances in the economy of the state of Kerala in India in the form of money sent by its workers in the Gulf countries is now widely acknowledged. Initially, emigration of skilled labour did not create any major bottleneck back home, but their continued emigration resulted in significant scarcity of skilled workers in the state.

At present the state Kerala provides higher wage rates among the states in India. The differentials in wage rates between Kerala and neighbouring
states received the attention of workers in other states. Migration of workers seeking employment in Kerala from other states like West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Chandigarh apart from the workers already present in this state from Tamil Nadu are increasing.

1.1 Statement of the problem

In the early phase of Gulf emigration from Kerala, the emigrants had been mostly non-agricultural labourers with low levels of education. They also included some skilled workers like carpenters, masons, and electricians. The emigration of the unemployed unskilled workers had helped reduction of unemployment. The money they sent home accelerated the construction industry and thus helped further reduction of unemployment.

Initially, emigration of skilled labour had not created any major bottleneck back home, but their continued emigration resulted in significant scarcity of skilled workers in the state. It is often said that it is easy to find a plastic surgeon in Kerala than a good carpenter. The scarcity was followed inevitably by increases in wage rates. After a lapse of about 60 years, Kerala is again becoming a net in-migrating state. As soon as a contractor takes up a construction or road work, he appoints an agent to recruit workers not only from neighbouring states but also from states as far away as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal. Emigration of workers from Kerala, demographic contraction of the supply of young workers brought about by rapid demographic transition in the state, higher wage rates of Kerala workers, ability
Introduction

of Kerala workers to sustain themselves with remittances from relatives even without work for long periods, reluctance on the part of Kerala workers to do hard physical work- all these have engendered the era of replacement migration in Kerala.

The migrant workers are not paid Kerala level wages. The contract system of employment is also increasing in this state. And they began to move into Kerala and to take up work, especially in the construction sector. What started as a trickle soon assumed the dimensions of a torrent in the course of a few years? Thus started the era of replacement migration to Kerala.

In the light of above discussion, the current study on “Impact of replacement migration on wages and employment on construction sector in Kerala”, has been undertaken with the following objectives.

1.2 The objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study are as follows

1. Assess the demographic profile of the migrant workers in select activities.

2. To identify the socio–economic factors responsible for migration.

3. To examine the changes in employment, wages and other living conditions of the workers after migration

4. Study the expenditure pattern and remittance behaviour of migrant workers.
Introduction

5. Highlight the problems faced by the migrant workers and to suggest recommendations on the basis of field study findings.

1.3 Hypotheses

To achieve the objectives of the study, the main hypotheses formulated for the present study are as follows

1. There are changes in employment, wages and other living conditions of the workers after migration.

2. Whether the respondents differed in their opinions on the severity of the problems faced in their working areas.

3. Migration of workers is enhancing the expenditure pattern of the migrants.

4. Finance is the main reason for migration.

5. Majority of the population is migrating from northern parts of India.

1.4 Scope and significance of the study

During the last five years much has been done in improving the life situation, education, health, etc. of the migrant workers. Migrant workers, seeking employment in Kerala from other states like West Bengal, Bihar, Odissa, Chattisgargh, Jarkhand etc, apart from the workers already present in this state from Tamil Nadu are increasing. These workers are subjected to
inhuman exploitation by paying low wages at below subsistence level and forcing them to work under shabby conditions at work place. They are nomadic type of job seekers and once they get into the work situation they enjoy it and leave it to another place for new assignment. Health, environmental parameters and even money is not a problem for them. They work and live in the same place without the knowledge of privileges they are entitled to get. A large number of them are also suffering from contagious diseases due to lack of sanitation and healthy environment. The contract system of employment is also increasing in our state. But compared to the migrant workers, the local workers are well organised and succeed in getting decent wages and working conditions. Awareness programmes are being conducted by the state for the migrant workers. The relatively higher wages and the general atmosphere of better respect, status and protection to labour in Kerala as compared to that in their home states have attracted migrant labour to the state.

This is a pioneering work as far the researcher is concerned. The researcher has not come across a study which covers the impact of replacement migration to Kerala. However it is felt that this study can be utilised for any new policies coming up on this subject. So the researcher has attempted to evaluate the impact of replacement migration on wages and employment on construction sector in Kerala.
1.5 Plan of the study

The study is arranged in six chapters. A brief description of the content of each chapter is given below.

Chapter I:- The first chapter gives an introduction to the topic explaining the statement of problem, objectives of the study, hypotheses and scope and significance of the study.

Chapter II:- The second chapter presents a review of existing literature on the topic and related areas, based on scholarly works of various researchers. The available literature is arranged in three groups: Literature with international perspective, national perspective and regional perspective. It includes concept of migration, process of international migration, process of internal migration, theoretical framework on informal sector migration, reasons for migration, studies on different dimensions of migration.

Chapter III:- The third chapter highlights the concept migration. It explains definitional aspect of labour migration, sources of labour supply, characteristics of modern migration, nature of migration, causes of migration, motives for migration, some other social and economic aspects of migration, effects of migration, social and
Introduction

psychological effects of migration, migration in Kerala, remedial measures.

Chapter IV:- The fourth chapter describes the methodology of research and statistical techniques used for the analysis and presentation of data. The methods are selection of the area, selection of the sample, source of data, period of the study, quantitative techniques and limitations.

Chapter V:- The fifth chapter deals with an empirical verification of the impact of replacement migration on wages and employment on construction sector in Kerala. The analysis is based on the data collected by the researcher. This chapter is mainly based on quantitative information collected by conducting the sample survey as well as information collected from secondary sources, personal discussion, interviews and observations made by the researcher.

Chapter VI:- The sixth chapter deals with important findings and conclusions of the study. The findings and conclusions reveal the impact of replacement migration to Kerala. The researcher has put forward some suggestions to improve the conditions of the migrant workers and to reduce the consequences of migration to Kerala.