ABSTRACT

This is a study of the characteristics of migrants in Chennai city. Yet, the content of the thesis goes beyond describing the simple characteristics of the migrants: rather, the study has an ‘urbanization and quality of life and work’ focus. The premise of the study is that the migrants have acted in concert with the ‘push and pull’ of their origins and the final destination that is Chennai city. In their decisions to move, rather than stay back where they were born and living (origins), they have deliberated on the process and consequences of their moves and, most importantly, they have borne a dream of life and work in Chennai city. This research could evaluate in some deeper sense using a questionnaire survey which could reveal the migrants’ perceptions as to the quality of life and the overall impressions of life in Chennai city. Further, to evaluate different and important conditions of life and work compared to ‘before’ their coming to Chennai, in such aspects as the nature, value and knowledge of Chennai urban environment, health, education, housing and basic infrastructures, employment, Chennai economy, recreation and safety.

The thesis is organized in seven chapters, reporting on the theoretical (Chapters 1 to 4) and the empirical results of the study (Chapters 5 and 6) with a conclusion, outlining implications and recommendations of the study. While the first chapter introduces the problem of study, research questions and hypotheses, the second chapter reviews and appraises relevant
literature on both migration research and quality of life research. The third chapter provides for a detailed profile of the city of Chennai, focusing pointedly on the most recent developments in the last decade or so which are reflected in the analysis and interpretation of the study. The research methodology adopted in the study is described for the benefit of the readers, with focus on primary and secondary sources of data, including sample, sampling, questionnaire, and interviews, statistical techniques used in the analysis of survey data, graphical representations and library research. The fifth and the sixth chapters are the core chapters, with the fifth chapter discussing the characteristics of the migrants of Chennai and the sixth chapter elaborating on the revealed perceptions of the migrants of Chennai on the overall quality of life and impressions and on the perceptions of conditions now compared to ‘before’ their coming to Chennai city. The last chapter summarizes and concludes the thesis with suggestions and recommendations.

Quality of life and impressions of quality of life of migrants in Chennai: The two factor dimensions extracted are labeled as ‘Quality of Life Dimension’ and ‘Well-being in Life and Work Dimension’. The two lead us to the following conclusions: The migrants’ ‘life and work as a whole’ and the ‘actual work they do’ have been most satisfying. The satisfying facts about the quality of life they have achieved as migrants to the metropolitan city are: ‘they handle problems in their lives’ better, they are ‘contented with their life and work’, and they are able to ‘adjust to changes in their lives’ better than before. What is more important is that they also see their co-workers in the same situation and light. The migrants of Chennai have come strongly and
reiterated that their ‘overall quality of life’ has been better. Their ‘physical well-being’ and their ‘mental and emotional state’ to take on life’s, and even work’s, challenges in the city have been better as well. They have also reflected an ability to ‘enjoy their life and work’ because of the ‘overall ability of theirs’ to handle stress’ and their ‘personal life’.

The conclusion is also that the migrants have done commendably well and achieved a greater and better semblance of an overall quality of life and a well-being in their life and work. They have sacrificed a lot in their personal lives to achieve and to reach a greater feeling of achievement in them. The implication of the study is that the migrants have greatly focused on achieving a state of quality of life and well-being (physical, mental and emotional state) and they have been on their way to achieving them. The Chennai migrants have also shown that they have comfortably achieved and gained a foothold in the city. It is necessarily their social relationships that have assisted them with successful adaptation, which in the future may enhance further their quality of life. Regarding the social security domain, concerns surrounding the lack of medical care, retirement pension and child education have frequently been mentioned as significantly influencing the population's migration life. Family life has definitely been crucial to the migrants' ability to adapt and has served as a stress reliever, a source of strength and also a sense of safety. The Chennai migrants have perhaps found that support and harmonious relations among family members are vital to their ability to adapt to a new and different environment. Family support has been, and is, far more important than other established support systems.