In Chapters IV and V, we examined occupational change and education as sources of mobility for the Syrian Christians. In both areas, the Syrian case, as we indicated presents a specificity of its own. We now turn to migration as an indicator of mobility. It is very closely linked to the indicators that have been discussed, because both occupational change and education can stimulate migration and influence it strongly.

In our discussion of migration as a source of mobility in Chapter III, we began by raising the fundamental question in a study of migration - why do people move? Do they move from one place to another because of need or necessity, or do they migrate out of choice? What determines where they go, and what happens to them after they move? In studying a minority group, how do we examine migration? First of all, individuals may independently take decisions and migrate. But to the extent they are from the same group, these independent actions have a combined effect. Secondly, migrations may be sponsored by one's kin, ethnic group or religious networks. This sponsored migration leads to mobility of the group. Thirdly, a group may decide to migrate due to hostile conditions in the present home, that is, a group may
migrate due to economic, political or cultural factors.

A great deal has been written about the dramatic changes that were brought about in Indian society in the 19th century. With the establishment and spread of educational and medical facilities, cash crop economy and communication networks, one of the more important factors in the context of migration was that India became more accessible to Indians. It was easier for people to move, and because some centres developed more than others, these attracted more people. The phenomenon of increasing urbanization takes place in this context.

When we look at minorities in India in the context of migration, we see considerable differences between the groups. As we indicated in Chapter I, for the Jews and the Parsis, their very origin in India was as migrants. Both arrived as refugees fleeing from religious persecution in Palestine and Iran. Although they were granted refugee status, and have lived here for several hundred years, contributing significantly to the Indian economy, there was always the consciousness of a homeland far away. In the case of the Jews, the formation of the state of Israel in 1948 was what the Jews had always prayed for, and they migrated in large numbers. In the case of the Parsis, when Indian independence was imminent, it appeared that their
ties with Iran could be renewed. Many Parsis had too many economic roots here, so India remained their home.

The Jews and the Parsis are really sojourners in India. The Jains crystallized as a group from within the native civilization and were never a migrant refugee group. But, within India, they, like the Marwaris, had no homeland and migrated to various urban centres. The Sindhis became refugees at the time of partition. Forced to leave Sind in Pakistan, India became their home, but having no comparable homeland here, they became dispersed all over India. Despite differences of religious doctrine and mode of incorporation, the Parsis, Jews and the Jains have one thing in common, they all lack a homeland in India, and they are urban groups.

Migration and subsequent settlement have been primarily to urban areas. As we saw earlier, for the Parsis, Jains, Jews and the Marwaris, the history of their migration has been in pursuit of new avenues, for trade in the case of the Jains and Marwaris, and professional and entrepreneurial activity in the case of the Jews and the Parsis. Education, which the Parsis had, and sought, attracted them to Bombay. In the chapter on occupational change, we discussed how this migration led to a linear displacement in terms of occupations which was not so in the case of the Syrian Christians.
Migration has resulted in these communities being spread far and wide. Over time, they have established roots in their new environment. Often this has meant that ties with the place of origin remain little more than a sentimental attachment. This attachment does not extend to winding up their operations and returning home.

The Sikhs, like the Jains, were never viewed as followers of an alien faith. Nevertheless, they became migrant refugees consequent to partition, as the Sindhis did. Unlike the Sindhis, however, the Sikhs had an identifiable homeland in the Punjab. They were both rural and urban in residence. Those among them who were traditionally farmers, namely the Jat Sikhs, continued with this occupation. Others ventured to various urban centres, and took to a range of occupations. In addition, many Sikhs went beyond the shores of India in search of employment. After 1947, many Sikhs were found in Burma, Malaya, Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines and China. Many also went to the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Canada. Small entrepreneurs also set up businesses on the east coast of Africa.¹ The Sikhs were migrant, but they always had a strong rootedness in the Punjab. The emigre nearly always returned.

When we look at the Syrian Christians, we are
considering a group which emerged in India not as a migrant refugee group, but as a result of trading settlements and subsequent intermarriage and conversion from upper castes. We have already discussed how Christianity in India continues to be associated with post-colonial missionary activity. But Syrian Christians, who are the oldest Christians in India, predate the colonial period considerably. They have coexisted with other groups in Kerala for centuries. As a group, they have a strong territorial attachment. Migration has played an important role in their economic development. This is true of the Malayali in general.

We can discuss three types of migration among Malayalis, 1) Migration within Kerala. The most important of such migration was the agricultural colonization of the High Ranges and Malabar, 2) Migration from Kerala to other parts of India, 3) Migration from Kerala to other parts of the world, notably (a) Malaysia and Singapore, (b) Africa, (c) Europe and the United States of America and to some extent Australia, and (d) the Middle-East.

MIGRATION WITHIN KERALA

In most countries that were under colonial rule, the development of plantations was as a result of that colonial presence. In Kerala, several plantation centres developed
in the Western Ghats. These were in the high ranges of Travancore and the highlands in Malabar. Farmer\textsuperscript{2} has shown that in the 19th century, extension of area under cultivation in India was associated with plantation crops, particularly tea. After 1931, there was a noticeable increase in the density of population of the High Range taluks with the development of rubber, tea, coffee and cardamom plantations. In the 20th century, the extension of cultivated area was associated with the spontaneous movement of peasants from the plains to jungle areas. In Kerala, peasant colonization of Malabar gained momentum after the establishment of plantations, and land hungry peasants took up virgin forest land for cultivation. A significant aspect of this migration was that the majority of migrants were Syrian Christians from Travancore. As we discussed in Chapter II, the early migrants were land hungry small peasants, but the migration soon swelled to include middle and rich peasants as well. This migration began from the 1920's, reached a peak between 1948-1969, and came virtually to a stop after the nationalization of private forests in 1971.\textsuperscript{3} The high ranges continued to attract people. Those who worked on plantations run by Europeans bought land. People who sold paddy land found plantations a worthwhile investment, because they were exempt from taxation, and were profitable.
MIGRATION TO OTHER PARTS OF INDIA

Malayalis have, on the whole, shown a great propensity to migrate in search of economic betterment. Kerala occupies the third position among the states which have the highest proportion of outmigrants to the total population. Also, the outmigration of women for reasons other than marriage was higher in Kerala than other states. This outmigration of Malayalis was dramatic after 1931. Prior to that according to Zachariah, there were more inmigrants than outmigrants, and these were mainly plantation labourers from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and other areas. Before 1951, Malayalis were all over India, but particularly in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. What characterized them was that they were young, had high educational attainments and followed clerical, administrative and professional occupations.

Madras attracted Malayalis from early colonial times, and between 1921-1941, in particular, many Syrian Christians moved there. Malayalis in Madras were in government service in professions and banking and business. Bombay and Delhi too, have seen the emergence of sizeable Malayali settlements. In Bombay, early migrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were lower middle class Muslims. After 1940, the movement has been primarily of white collar workers. Ac-
According to a survey conducted in 1987 by the Department of Economics and Statistics, of the 6.82 lakhs of Malayalis who have migrated from Kerala, 51.7% have moved to other states and Union Territories in India (see Table VI.1).

MIGRATION OUTSIDE INDIA

Malayalis have not only migrated to other parts of India, but are found all over the world in occupations ranging from skilled and semi-skilled to the professions. This migration is interesting. The movement of people to different parts of the world can be chronologically discerned. Also, the skills of people migrating to different areas followed a pattern. From the beginning of the 20th century, Malayalis began to move out of the country. Emigration of skilled and semi-skilled labour is not new. British colonization offered new economic opportunities to Malayalis by way of recruitment to the army and employment on European plantations in Malaya, Burma, Ceylon and Africa. As early as 1911, people from Travancore were found in Malayan plantations. Between 1921 and 1957, the number of Malayalis in Malaysia rose from 17,190 to 72,971. They were the only major South Indian group there which did not decline in numbers. Not only were they labourers, but they also provided clerical services and subordinate administrative services.
The post-war revival of the emigration of skilled and semi-skilled manpower can be divided into two phases. The 1950s and 1960s saw the movement of people to Africa, particularly as plantation managers and teachers. There was also a significant movement to the United Kingdom and the United States of America, in which professionals and semi-professionals played an important role. In the 1970s, the emigration was predominantly to the Middle East and was largely of skilled and semi-skilled workers. This phase is of particular interest, because here Kerala has made a large contribution, far out of the state's share in the country's population, which is less than 4%. At the beginning of 1980, of the estimated 350,000 Indians working in the Middle East, as many as 187,000 were Malayalis. Workers from Kerala thus comprised more than 50% of the Indian work force in the Gulf.

One aspect of Malayali migrant behaviour, irrespective of his destination, must be emphasized. There is an extraordinary territorial attachment between the Malayali and his home state. This has meant that in most cases, the migrant intends to return. In the case of Gulf migration, employment is contractual, and citizenship will not be granted. Therefore the migrant has no choice but to return. This is not so with the other countries, where the migrants have a choice. Sandhu, for example, has pointed out that
Of the Indians in Malaya, the Malayalis appear to have been the least anxious to bring their women folk with them. Their sex ratio was the lowest, in 1957 with 480 females to 1,000 males. They are the least settled Indian group in Malaya and many, even to this day, generally seem to regard Malaya as a place to earn an income to support families in India.

Table VI.1: Number of Migrants from Kerala, 1987

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>1987</th>
<th>% to total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Gulf Countries</td>
<td>388,929</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Other Foreign Countries</td>
<td>28,727</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Other States and Union Territories</td>
<td>352,404</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>682,060</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Since the most significant migration of Malayalis outside India has taken place to the Gulf countries, we dwell on this a little longer. Asians have been working in the Gulf since the beginning of the 20th century in sizeable numbers, but the flow of migrants became demographically significant and economically important only after the oil embargo of 1973. The bulk of Indian workers to the Middle East originate from Kerala. Although the early pioneers were Muslims, Hindus and Christians soon caught up. Within the Middle East, the U.A.E. has the largest number of migrants, but of late Saudi Arabia has raised its relative
In terms of sheer numbers, the Gulf migration, as we have seen, is significant. Also, unlike migration to Europe, the United States and Australia, which consists largely of professionals and semi-professionals, both education and levels of skill of Gulf migrants are low. Nearly two-thirds of the migrants has less than ten years of schooling. The unskilled component of the Gulf migrant is as high as 62%. In the case of migration to the rest of the world, the unskilled component is 43%12 The distribution of Gulf returned according to educational qualification shows both the low education level and low levels of skill of the migrants (see Table VI.2).

Table VI.2: Educational Status (General and Technical Education) of Gulf Returnees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. General Education</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Sl. Technical Education</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Education No.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Illiterate</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>1. Without technical qualification</td>
<td>63.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Below SSLC</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>2. Technical skill without technical qualification</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. SSLC</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>3. Technical certificate</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Graduate &amp; above</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>4. Technical diploma</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Technical degree &amp; above</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The acute employment problem in Kerala and the comparatively high wage rates offered in Gulf countries are the most important reasons for the large scale emigration in recent years. But employment was contractual and therefore not permanent. Barring categories like engineering, accounting and certain other specialized skills and professions, migrants are not entitled to take their families. Of those who can, many choose to go alone. The 1987 survey of the Department of Economics and Statistics cites the return flow of migrants to Kerala as a matter of concern, because of the burden it will add to the already alarming employment situation in the state. Of an estimated 84,475 who have returned, as many as 42.6% returned in 1986 alone. The loss of employment due to the termination or cancellation of the contract is seen as the main reason for the return of the migrants, accounting for the return of 63.7% of the return of migrants. The Gulf war of 1990 has had an impact on migrants. About 70% of those evacuated from Kuwait between October and November 1990, were from Kerala. Many of them could go back because reconstruction work was needed.

In the Syrian Christian case, migration has played an important role. They have been involved significantly in migration, both within India and outside it. One of the primary reasons for this migration is the chance for econom-
ic betterment. The move may be out of sheer necessity, that is, the individual's situation is so bad that the only way out is to take a chance elsewhere. Alternatively, a person is attracted by the prospect of doing better elsewhere, and therefore he migrates.

Rml belongs to the former type. Twenty nine years ago, he and his wife arrived in this village, in the paddy cultivating region near Kottayam. They moved from Rml's native village a few hundred miles away. He was one of two brothers, and had no wealth to speak of, his father having owned only a few cents of land, and he himself receiving only primary school education. One of his friends, a Christian too, had already moved here, and urged Rml to join him and three others in forming a company to catch and market frogs' legs and lobsters. Economic necessity forced Rml to move along with his wife. He comforted himself by saying that things could not get worse in the new place. For twelve years they struggled, with Rml's wife working by the side of her husband. Rml soon broke away from his partners over a financial misunderstanding and started out on his own. To begin with, he earned as little as two and three rupees a day. Soon the business picked up, and they were in a position to buy a plot of land.

Rml's wife recalls that her husband's relatives were full of caustic remarks about his decision to move out of
the village. Their initial struggles seemed to confirm their relatives' doubts. When Rml acquired a piece of land, they were ready to believe that he had achieved some measure of success. They had four children which added considerably to their financial constraints. Despite that, Rml set about building a house with practically no resources. They built two rooms to begin with, and started living in them without doors because that would have been too expensive.

Over time, Rml established himself in the fisheries trade. Today, he is one of the wealthiest men in the village. While his major source of income is still from fishing and he owns three trawlers, he also owns a mill, and a building which fetches him a monthly rent of Rs.1,000. Economic necessity forced him to leave his village. Luckily he seized an opportunity which changed his life. He speaks with pride of how he has come up the hard way. Once he was established, he invested in a building and a mill. This is, as we saw in Chapter IV, a typical attitude. Both his sons have college degrees, but are not interested in studying further. They say they want to be their own bosses, and so want to start their own business. But they are not keen, they tell their father, on taking over the fishing business.

Many people can afford a choice in the matter of migration. Rm2 is a doctor and works in England. His wealthy
family lives in the same village as Rm1. It is a traditionally wealthy family which was earlier in paddy cultivation, but has now invested much money in rubber plantations. Rm2's younger brother manages the plantations. After Rm2 finished his medical education in India, he wanted to go abroad and study. His father had financed his medical education and was very proud of the fact that his son was a doctor. He sent Rm2 to England, and once he finished his education there, he was lucky enough to get a job in a big hospital there. Now in his early forties, Rm2 has done well for himself. His wife is also a doctor and they have two sons and one daughter. He comes home every year to visit his parents. He took them to England once, but they didn't like the place, so now Rm2 comes home.

It is not only the professional who migrates, Rm3 is twenty eight years old, and is employed in the Gulf as a nurse. Her father works as a tapper on a rubber estate, and her mother works as a daily wage labourer on the same estate in a town about 70 km. from Kottayam. Rm3's only brother was one of the early migrants to the Gulf, having gone there as an unskilled worker. Once his sister finished school, he suggested to his father that she be sent for training as a nurse. Being in the Gulf, he realized that there was a great employment potential for nurses. Once she completed her training he approached one of his superiors and helped
Rm3 get a job in a hospital there. She has been there for nearly five years now, and manages to help her parents financially. Only now has her brother got married. Earlier, he said he could not take on too much responsibility all together. We notice again the joint family ethic that we discussed in Chapter IV in operation here.

Nor does every migrant go out of the country. Rm4 works in Delhi as a clerk in a government office. He is now in his early thirties and went to Delhi nearly six years ago. He belongs to Kottayam, where his father owns some land and cultivates paddy. Rm4's brother helps his father and also runs a small shop. Rm4's maternal cousin works in Delhi too, and it was he who helped him. Rm4 had completed his pre-degree examination and was wondering whether to look for a job or go in for graduation. At the time his cousin was home on holiday and suggested that Rm4 learn typing and shorthand and then look for a job. When Rm4 went to Delhi, his cousin helped him a great deal and gave him accommodation too. Now Rm4 lives on his own with his wife and five year old son. They come home once in two years, because it is quite expensive. 'Not the travel,' says Rm4, 'but bringing something for everyone. They think because I am in Delhi, I must be earning a lot of money.'

The type and level of education determines the place to which one migrates. Thus we saw that Rm3's brother migrated
to the Gulf as an unskilled worker, having only primary school education. Rm2 is a doctor in England. We saw how Re1's daughter trained as a teacher and worked in Africa for several years. Rm5 too went to Africa. He had very little education, and was something of a rolling stone. He was from a family that had interests in timber. One of his uncles took him under his wing and they went to Africa, where Rm5 was appointed the manager of an estate. After several years there, he invested in plantation land in the High Ranges and returned to manage his own estate. Today, in his late seventies, he lives with his younger son and his family in Cochin, having sold the estate, because there was no one to look after it. His sons are both well placed, one a businessman in Cochin and the other a company executive.

The type and level of education in turn produce a prestige rating: migrants to the United States of America, that is, highly educated professionals vs. migrants to the Gulf, that is, low education levels and non-prestigious jobs. It is not true that all who go to the United States of America are highly qualified or that no one who goes to the Gulf is. The question is one of predominant images. The Overseas Development and Employment Promotion Consultants (ODEPC) is a state government agency, one of many such agencies engaged in helping work seekers find overseas employment. In 1991, 321 persons in different categories of
skill were given placement by the ODEPC. Of these 287 were in Saudi Arabia and 34 were in Singapore. The categories of work that these 321 came under is shown in Table VI.3. The prestige rating persists. We asked Rm1 about employment possibilities for his sons outside the country. 'They don't have much education', he told us, 'so what job would they get, and anyway, no one from this area has gone to the Gulf.' There was a wealth of meaning in his statement, that is, migration to the Gulf is associated largely with unskilled jobs or people 'who don't mind sending their girls to become nurses.'

Even those with a professional background who migrate to the Gulf are quick to dissociate themselves from the stereotype. Rm6 belongs to a very wealthy family. His father is based in a village near Kottayam, but also has a large rubber estate. Rm6 was a bright student and trained as an engineer. After working in Kerala for a few years, he managed to get a good job with a construction firm in the Gulf in 1959. When we asked him about the general movement of people to the Gulf, he was quick to say, 'I was there before the boom, and anyway, I was in a highly paid job, not like all these other people.' Since he was a qualified professional, life there was very comfortable, unlike that of the semi-skilled and unskilled workers who form the bulk of the migrants. Rm6's brother was left in charge of his
father's estate. Rm6 returned to his village when his contract expired, built a house and returned to the Gulf after renewing his contract. In the interim, Rm6's father died, and he got locked in a dispute with his brother over their father's property. The brother maintained that since he had looked after the property while Rm6 went abroad and made money, he should inherit the entire property.

Table VI.3: Categorywise distribution of Persons Deployed by ODEPC during 1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of Persons Deployed (1)</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of Persons Deployed (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Diesel Mechanic</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Nurses</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>Consol Operator</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab Technician</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Engine Operator</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietician</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Equipment Operator</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Handler</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welder</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Power Plant Technician</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>AC Mechanic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grit Blaster</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cooks</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crane Operator</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mill Machine Operator</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric Fitter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fabricator</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grinders</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mechanical Foreman</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiler Makers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Rigger</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Fitter</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Draughtsmen</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Plumber</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tractor Driver</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dentar</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto Electrician</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fork Lift Operator</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geologist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Salesman</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>General Workers</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Overseas Development and Employment Promotion Consultants.
This prestige rating has implications for marriage. The migrant to the United States of America is highly sought after as a spouse. This is because of the association of such migrants with well-paid and prestigious jobs. It is also important, because the wife can go with her husband or vice-versa, and the children born there have the right of citizenship. This is not so with migration to the Gulf, by and large. This means that wives and children stay back in India in order that their husbands struggle and earn some money. If the wife is employed in India, things are easier. Otherwise, one has to maintain an establishment here. The 'Gulf widows' situation is not easy.

This was so with Rm7 who lives in a town near Kottayam. She is twenty-six years old and lives with her parents and daughters. She works in a rubber factory nearby. Her brother, who works in a cement factory in Kottayam arranged her marriage to a friend of his in the Gulf who is a driver. Her parents were very keen that she marry him because they would see their daughter go up in the world. She too, was not unwilling. Now, six years later, she wonders whether, given another chance, she would take the same decision. Her husband earns well, and is a good man, sending them money regularly, and her parents too. But in six years of marriage, he has come only twice. She is happy to see him, but is always conscious that he will have to go away. There, it
is not an easy life for her husband either. Had he been in India, they would not have had so much money, but at least they would have been together.

Nevertheless, Gulf boys are at a premium. What is interesting is, given the generally low level of skill and education of a majority of Gulf migrants, many try to compensate by marrying well. They are often less interested in dowry than the bride's family, status and education. Actual instances of dowry are rare, but the stated preference is still for land or cash. The possession of land is still considered an easier route to respectability than wealth in any other form. 18

In Rm8's case, things were different. Coming from a wealthy business family in Kottayam, he completed his medical education in Karnataka, and thereafter left for the United States of America. He is in his early fifties and has another brother who has a seafood export firm in Cochin. His parents were always worried that he would marry a foreigner and kept pressurizing him to marry as early as possible. He said that he wanted to marry a doctor so that she could also work, and jobs for professionals were good in America. He married one and they worked in the United States of America for nearly twenty years before settling down in Kottayam to work in a large hospital. They plan to
set up their own hospital but only after the education of their son and daughter. Both are at the moment interested in studying medicine, and Rm9 would be very happy if that happened because then they could make the hospital a family concern.

Although the Syrian Christian is found all over India and in different parts of the world, there is a very strong attachment to his native state. Arguably, returning home is necessary in the case of the Gulf migrant, since he cannot acquire citizenship there. This strong home attachment may sometimes even hamper migration. When Rml's son wanted to go to Cochin with a friend to start a business, Rml discouraged him. He explained:

I asked my son, why go there when you will be known as an outsider? When I first came here, I was always known as Rml of such and such village, because in this small village where everyone was established, I was the poor outsider. Now I have done well, you have status and your roots are here. It is more important to be successful here than going somewhere else and doing well.

This strong sense of rootedness in one's village within the state of Kerala also means that there is a great need to demonstrate one's success at home. The Syrians adapt to the new environment, but retain or develop property interests at home. They may have a better lifestyle than they would have had at home, or they may have to struggle in their new home as do the many unskilled and semi-skilled workers in
the Gulf. But, across the board, the desire is seen to be successful at home, and this temporary emigration is seen as a means to this end. The demonstration of success is manifest in the acquisition of a house, property, a car, even charity. The visible indicator of higher living standards and success can be seen in the high level of construction activity in villages of high migration in Kerala. Construction and renewal of existing housing are accorded top priority. Prakash's village level study shows that one-third of households built new homes within five years of the migration of the worker. Another 20% repaired and reconstructed their homes.

The case of Rm2 illustrates this clearly. As a doctor in England, he is doing well. He owns a house and a car and would write home about his success. But his father was only satisfied when he came back and purchased some land and built a house. Then and only then did every one in the village talk about how well Rm2 was doing.

When Rm6 returned to India after his first tenure in the Gulf, he came back to the village. The first thing he did was to build a house. It is always pointed out as a 'Gulf' house, since it has all the trappings associated with house of a successful Gulf returned man -- it is large, with clearly visible marble and multi-coloured mosaic.
In the case of Rm3, her family history, as we saw, was one of struggle. Thanks to her brother, she is in the Gulf and helps her parents. They lived in a small house with a thatched roof, but today, it has been replaced by a concrete structure.

Rm9 also went to the Gulf as a carpenter. He lives with his wife and two children and his brother near Kottayam. He is in his late thirties. His father worked for a timber merchant and arranged to have Rm9 trained in carpentry. He was working with a seafood export company, making wooden crates. When the possibilities of employment in the Gulf loomed large, he decided to go, leaving his family behind. He worked there for nearly four years, and he recalls that it was very hard life. Compared with this place, wages seemed high. But in order to save as much money as possible, he and others like him had to struggle. 'Everyone thinks Gulf means money', he says, 'but they don't know how we live for that money.' He managed to rebuild his house and now he is working again in Kottayam, and so everyone is happy. But he does not want to go back, he says.

The kin network is strong. Family members help one another with education and sponsorship. The decision to migrate is often taken on account of family or friends.
Often, individuals migrate, because others in the family will look after matters at home. It is noticeable that Middle East migrants showed increased interdependence among family members. Kinship networks are stronger because there is a dependence on the family to provide support for those of the family left behind. It is also necessary for the worker to have authenticated documents from the host country employer, principally one document referred to as NOC, the no objection certificate. Getting it is quite difficult. Relatives and friends already working in the Gulf can be of great help in this regard. Those fending for themselves, practically have to buy the document, usually making illegal payments for the purpose. There is considerable dependence on family not only for information about jobs, but how to gain entry.20 According to one village level survey, 33% of migrants got their NOC's through close relatives.21 The Syrian Christians show a peculiar combination of familial collectivism and individual independence. There is adequate, but not excessive involvement with the family.

Rm3 was able to go to the Gulf because her brother helped her. Rm10 is from a village near Kottayam. He is in his late seventies, and spent much of his working life in a large company in Malaysia. His wife is a doctor who also worked there. They returned to India about ten years ago. By then, their eldest daughter was married and in the United
States of America. Their second daughter worked as a librarian with a public sector company for several years, and has now gone to America, thanks to the sponsorship of her sister. Likewise, Rm10's youngest son, who studied medicine in a private college in Karnataka, also moved to the United States of America.

In Rm2's case, we saw that his brother stayed back to manage the estate, leaving him free to go to the Gulf. Yet this help was not given ungrudgingly, and resulted in a dispute over property. Finally, Rm2 got his share and invested the money in a cardamom plantation. Cardamom plantations are lucrative, but because of the high initial costs, not everyone can afford to invest.

In Rm11's case, also, his brother assisted him. Having gone to the Gulf as a driver, he was keen that Rm11 too, should get a break in life. They belong to a lower middle class family, and their father had been a clerk in an office. Rm11's brother financed his training as a driver. He then worked for some time with a company in Kottayam which is his home. His brother spoke to his boss about the possibilities of Rm11 also getting employment there. Since his brother had been there for five years and was well liked it helped matters. Rm11 got a driver's job and went to the Gulf. Since he was not married, things were not too difficult. The two brothers have helped their parents and have
also managed to save well. They plan to return after a few years, and start some independent venture. People like Roc1, whom we met in Chapter IV, helped his brothers considerably when they wanted to go to the Gulf. He gave them money to go there, in addition to having financed their education. Consequently they were able to do well for themselves, far better than Roc1 himself. Nevertheless, he draws the line at embarking on any joint business venture when his brothers return as they plan to. He feels that he has done his duty by them, and wants to get on with his life independently.

Primarily one moves as a means of seeking better prospects elsewhere. The utility of the place to which the Syrian migrates must be greater than that of his native place for him to want to migrate. Economic betterment acts as a great incentive to migrate. Those who can afford to stay on, migrate because the gains to be made are significantly larger than at home, as we see in the case of doctors and other professionals and white collar workers. Those who are economically badly off see migration as their only chance at betterment. In relative terms, they are better off than they would have been had they chosen to stay back.

Both education and the lack of it are involved in migration. The type and level of education which, as we saw
in Chapter V, allocates one to occupations also determines the place to which one migrates. As certain occupations are prestigious because of the high level of education and lucrative nature of employment, so also does migration to certain countries become more prestigious than others. This is, as we saw, because of the perception that migration to some countries involves occupations which are more prestigious than others. The symbol of mobility then is not just that one migrates, but where one migrates to.

We earlier discussed nursing as an important avenue of occupational mobility. As we saw from Table VI.3, nurses continue to form a sizeable number of those securing overseas employment. Despite its low prestige rating, nursing is lucrative. This has made marriage to nurses employed abroad or likely to go abroad, an attractive proposition for highly qualified young men who aspire to go overseas in search of employment. Thus, as Oommen\textsuperscript{22} says

\begin{quote}
a new type of hypergamous marriage came into vogue, augmenting the status of lower middle class families to which nurses usually belong. The new situation brought about an ambivalent attitude to nursing as an occupation: its instrumental orientation and low social prestige coexist.
\end{quote}

When we considered occupational change and education in the context of mobility, we saw that the Syrians were comparable with the Sikhs. This is further reinforced when we consider migration. The Parsis, Jews, Jains, Marwaris
and Sindhis, all with no territorial attachment to particular regions in India, have also been essentially urban groups. They have, in varying degrees pursued specific kinds of occupations, and are essentially trade-entrepreneurial. The Syrians are unlike these groups and more like the Sikhs. Like the rootedness of Sikhs in the Punjab, the Syrians have a great sense of rootedness within India in the state of Kerala. They are also, like the Sikhs, both rural and urban. They have shown a great propensity to migrate in search of employment, but unlike the other groups we discussed, they have pursued a variety of occupations through their migrant behaviour. They have both demonstrated a strong attachment to their homeland, and no matter where they migrate, nearly always prefer to return. Of course, the Sikhs became migrant refugees at the time of partition, which status the Syrian Christians never had. The Syrians in many ways stand out as distinctive, even when we consider the question of migration.
Notes:


16. Ibid., p. 10.
18. Ibid., p. 209.