CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS
Chapter 9

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter deals with a summary of the whole study and the conclusions derived therefrom. It also gives suggestions for improvement of the living and economic conditions of Tamil workers in Kerala.

Inflow of Tamil workers into the labour market of Kerala has helped the state very much in its economic development by providing cheaper labour force. Various kinds of socio-economic developments and different forms of migration of Keralites have made the native labourers selective as well as changed Kerala into a manual labour deficient high wage rate state. Tamil workers who came as “replacement migrants” are, at present, an important source of manual labour. They engage in almost all activities irrespective of the nature or status of the job they perform. It can be hard, harmful or dirty or rejected by the native workers. They work in farms and fields, industries, construction sites, business firms and other areas, as skilled and unskilled workers. But they are concentrated in different types of construction activities. They strengthen the economy of the state by providing manual labour force to various economic activities, which would otherwise be impossible to carry on in their absence and have played an important role in making up the present face of the state.

Even though they have an important role in the economy of the state, their working and living conditions are very deplorable and some of them lead substandard lives. Child labour is rampant among them. Negative discrimination by employers and exploitation by intermediaries are the common features. Their unorganised nature increases injustice against them and makes their conditions more pitiable. They have got little recognition; they are looked down by the natives, and are one of the rejected communities in the state.
Several studies have been made in and outside the state about different kinds of migrations, different kinds of labourers, different kinds of communities in Kerala; but a migration stream, which has helped the state very much in its economic development or a community that has cast several impacts on the economy and upon the society has remained neglected for long. Tamil workers in Kerala have got little consideration from academicians and thus sufficient information is not available on their socio-economic characteristics, causes and consequences of their mission, working and living conditions etc. Similarly, their impact upon the local labourers, employers and trade union also remains undisclosed.

Based on Tamil workers working in Malappuram district and other interested groups in the labour market of the district, the present study is, thus, an attempt to provide sufficient information about the Tamil workers, their income and employment patterns, working and living conditions, impact of migration upon themselves and upon the labour market of the district. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To examine the socio-economic and demographic profile of Tamil workers in Kerala
2. To study the reasons behind their migration to Kerala, especially to Malappuram district.
3. To study their income and employment pattern in Kerala
4. To study their saving and remittance patterns and utilisation of remittances
5. To ascertain the extent of discrimination, if any, against Tamil workers
6. To analyse the changes in assets and liabilities before and after migration to ascertain whether migration has led to economic betterment of migrants
7. To analyse and evaluate impacts of their presence upon local workers, employers and trade unions
8. To suggest possible measures for improvement of standard of living as well as working conditions of Tamil workers in the district.

The study is a descriptive one based on primary and secondary data sources. The core group of concern was the Tamil workers working in the district of Malappuram. Data were collected through pre-tested, structured interview schedules, designed in such a way as to provide information to meet the objectives of the study. 1200 Tamil workers (based on accidental sampling method) were taken from seven development blocks (selected on the basis of random sampling). For the purpose of data collection from Tamil workers, help of translators or interpreters was sought.

Local workers, employers and trade union leaders of the district also come under the purview of the study. 420 workers, 60 each from the seven development blocks constituted the sample of local workers. These workers belonged to different sectors (agriculture, construction, industry and service) and different categories (skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled). Employers sample consisted of small and large farmers, contractors, businessmen and general public who provided employment. 30 employers from these 7 blocks totalling 210 formed the sample group of employers. 50 trade union leaders belonging to different unions and sections formed the sample of leaders. While selecting unions and leaders special consideration was given to strength and presence of unions in the district. Similarly, preference was also given to construction and agricultural wings of trade unions. Trade union leaders were selected on the basis of snowball sampling. For collecting data from local workers, employers and trade union leaders pre-tested, structured interview schedules were used.

Data were analysed by using various mathematical and statistical tools and techniques like percentages, averages, standard deviations etc. As and where necessary, it has also made use of other tools like chi-square, ANOVA
etc. Charts, graphs, diagrams etc., are used for clear presentation of the report. For analytical purpose of primary data Microsoft Excel, Statistica software programme has been used.

The study has been presented in nine chapters. The first chapter deals with introduction, scope, objectives, methodology etc., of the study. Second chapter provides literature reviews. In this chapter related literatures are arranged on the basis of studies made at the international level, national level, states levels, interstate level and at the district level.

Labour market features of the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu are explained in the third chapter. A comparative study of labour markets of these states disclosed certain similarities and dissimilarities. Labour force participation rates of these states show more or less the same trend, but work participation rates of Tamil Nadu are far better than that of Kerala. At the same time, wage rates of Kerala are very much higher than that of Tamil Nadu. Similarly, the migration patterns of these states have also undergone important changes during the period under review. These similarities and dissimilarities are the major reasons for the inter-state migration between these states.

The fourth chapter deals in detail with the general, economic and labour market conditions of Malappuram district, where the study is concentrated. Malappuram district is the most backward, most populous district of Kerala, having sent the largest number of emigrants and is in the developmental stage mainly on account of emigration and consequent remittances. Emigration and other socio-economic developments which have taken place over the years have led to both an increase in the demand for manual labour and also to shortage of manual labourers. This has made the district into a high wage rate district in Kerala, higher than that of the state average. Tamil workers are the important source of manual labour in different sectors of the economy, especially in construction and agriculture.
The socio-demographic profile and living conditions of Tamil workers working in the district are presented in chapter five. It shows that majority of Tamil workers in the district are Hindus belonging to scheduled castes and backward communities, migrated in their entry ages in to the labour market, due to labour related issues. Further, majority of them lives in rented accommodation facilities. This chapter highlights that majority of Tamil workers in the district have low socio-economic profile and background.

Chapter six dealt in detail with employment, wages, working conditions both at origin as well as at the destination and economic impact of migration. This chapter shows that in-migration has helped Tamil workers in increasing their incomes and earnings as well as in their economic improvement. Similarly, it has helped majority of them to acquire new skills and experiences as well as upward labour mobility.

Tamil workers and their attachment with trade unions in their nativity and at the destination as well as their attachment with their nativity is discussed in chapter seven. This chapter shows that only a minority of the Tamil workers have attachment with trade unions in their nativity as well as in the district. But, most of them have close ties with their nativity and they maintain their contact through communication and visits.

Impact of Tamil workers upon the local labour market is discussed in chapter eight. Tamil workers have influenced employment, wage rates and income of native workers; have increased supply of manual labourers. Local workers, employers and trade union leaders show helping attitude towards these guest workers, and there is no rivalry or 'sons-of-soil' approach against Tamil workers.
Thus the study shows that Tamil workers have an important place in the labour market and economy of the state of Kerala and their mission to Kerala has helped them in improving their economic conditions very much.

**Major Findings**

Major findings of the study are summarised here under:

Even though the wage rates of Kerala are much higher than that of Tamil Nadu, the growth rate of agricultural wages during 1989-90 to 2002-03 was higher in Tamil Nadu. The average agricultural wage rate of Kerala (Rs.247) in the year 2002-03 was two times higher than that of Tamil Nadu (Rs.118). But the growth rate of wages during the period 1989-2003 was higher in Tamil Nadu (754.89 per cent) than that of Kerala (714.47 per cent). Similarly, the agricultural wage index of Tamil Nadu during 2002-03, taking 1989-90 as base year, was also higher than that of Kerala.

Interstate migration pattern between these two states have changed during the period 1971-2001. The number of interstate in-migrants in Kerala from Tamil Nadu shows an increasing trend, but the number of out-migrants to Tamil Nadu from Kerala shows a declining trend. Up to 1991 Census, the number of out-migrants from Kerala to Tamil Nadu exceeded the number of in-migrants from Tamil Nadu to Kerala (i.e. Kerala was a net out-migrating state), but as per the 2001 census, the number of in-migrants from Tamil Nadu exceeded the number of out-migrants from Kerala to Tamil Nadu (i.e. Kerala became a net in-migrating state from Tamil Nadu). Further, the percentage share of in-migrants of these states in total inter-state immigrants of the respective states also shows a declining trend. But at the same time, the percentage share of Tamil in-migrants Malappuram district shows an increasing trend, just opposite to that of the state level.
The study also found that 87 percent of the migrants were males, 76 percent Hindus, 50 percent belonged to scheduled castes and tribes, and 35 percent backward classes. Nearly four-fifths of them belonged to the age group of 16-45 years and the mean age of the sample workers is 33.33 years; majority of them migrated into the state at an average age of 21.4 years. Child labourers are also seen among them.

Nearly 70 percent of the migrants are married and more than three-fourths have primary or above primary education. One-quarter of the workers are illiterates and six percent of them have above secondary level education. Workers from rural areas constituted 97 percent of the migrants and three northern coastal districts of Tamil Nadu dominated in this migration stream. Majority of them were casual workers; more than three-fourths of them were engaged in agricultural or related activities in their nativity and more than half of them have more than 10 years' experience in the district.

Low wage rates constituted the major push factor for migration accompanied by unemployment, underemployment, poverty and bad working conditions. It shows that labour related issues have compelled more than 63 percent of the workers to leave their homes. Better wages and better working conditions of Kerala attracted about three-fourth of the workers, while the special motivating factor to migrate to the district was better wages and existence of friends and relatives. 81 percent of the Tamil workers in the district live in rented accommodation.

It was found that, 36 percent of the workers are engaged in construction followed by 29 percent in agriculture. In addition to these they are found to be engaged in a wide variety of occupations. Majority of them are engaged as casual or day labourers. These workers occupy on an average 23 days in a month in the district, while they are expected to engage 15 days only in their
nativity. Working time of 59 per cent of them in Kerala is more than that of their nativity. But 18 per cent of them have to work for a lesser time.

The study revealed that, on an average a Tamil worker in the district earns daily Rs.143, and monthly Rs.4318. They incur an average total expense of Rs.1260 per month. This includes almost all normal expenses and, in addition, it includes average monthly expenses on intoxicating articles (Rs.343), on lottery (Rs.292) and on cinemas (Rs.69). Their average net wages income per month is Rs.2344, which can be considered as their savings, and it is more than double of their expected wages income from their nativity. Average monthly net wages income of more than 60 per cent of the sample is above Rs.2000. In addition to the normal wages 25 per cent of them get overtime wages and 22 per cent get gifts, presents etc. Some of them have other sources of income in Kerala, and more than 60 per cent have other sources of income in their nativity.

A reduction in the present wage rate of Kerala will not lead to a complete withdrawal or return of Tamil workers. If the wage rate decreases up to 20 per cent of the present wage rate, 30 per cent of the workers will return to their nativity. But if the wage rate decreases by 30 per cent there will be an exodus of 70 per cent of Tamil workers. 94 per cent of them are satisfied with the present wage rates, and more than three-fourth with the present jobs.

The study revealed that 87 per cent of the sample remits money to home. For the purpose of remittance most of them depend either on money order or friends and relatives going home, or pay personally on return. Further, 80 per cent of the in-migrant households depend partly or fully on remittances for their day-to-day expenses. In addition to using their earnings for day-to-day household requirements, 18 per cent of them have used a part of their savings for purchasing or making improvements in land; 59 per cent for repairs, renewals or construction, of houses; 57 per cent for purchase of consumer
durables and 22 per cent for marriage purposes. Similarly, 17 per cent of them have also used a part for educational purposes of their children.

Migration is a means of vertical mobility of labour; 79 per cent of them have acquired new skill and experiences after coming to Kerala leading to an improvement in the incomes and earnings 86 per cent of the workers who have acquired new skills and experiences. A comparison of sectors of their engagement before and after migration shows that most of them were have shifted from primary sector to more remunerative construction and service sectors of Kerala.

The study disclosed that negative discrimination against migrants exist in the labour market of Kerala also. More than 60 per cent of the workers have felt different kinds of discriminations. 51 per cent of them have felt negative discrimination in wage payment. This indicates that there is negative discrimination against Tamil workers in the district.

Migration to Kerala has led to the economic improvement of Tamil workers. It has helped 19 per cent of the workers to acquire own houses, 31 per cent to convert their kutcha houses into pucka houses. Similarly, it has helped five per cent of the landless in the sample to acquire land and many to increase size of their land holdings. In addition to these, 75 workers in the sample have acquired land in Kerala. Further the cash in hand and bank balances have also increased significantly; 51 per cent of the workers have become bank account holders. Similarly indebtedness of the in-migrants has decreased considerably.

Nearly 10 per cent of the workers were members of trade unions in their nativity and four per cent of them participate in trade union activities of the district. While 26 per cent of the non-members mentioned that trade unions of Kerala do not give membership to Tamils and this shows the reluctance of trade unions of Kerala to involve Tamils in trade union activities Similarly, six
per cent of the workers have to approach trade unions leaders and 93 per cent of them were happy in the approach and attitude of the leaders towards them. Further, 58 per cent of the workers have felt the need for a special organisation of Tamils in the district.

The study shows that 99 per cent of the sample had one or other kinds of interest in their nativity and maintain attachment with the nativity through communication and visits. All of them used letters and / or telephone for communication with the nativity. 11 per cent of the sample visits nativity each month; 42 per cent of them visit quarterly and on the occasions of ceremonies and festivals. Further, 53 per cent of them usually visit their nativity during sowing seasons and engage in work. Similarly, 56 per cent of them visit during harvesting seasons and engage in work. These workers remain in their nativity till the farming operations or the season is over. This shows that more than 50 per cent of them are seasonal migrants. Further, 66 per cent of them spend one week to one month in their nativity during one visit.

Mother state of wives of three per cent of the sample workers is Kerala and children of eight per cent of the workers also study in Kerala. Lack of educational facilities for children hindered eight per cent of them in bringing their family to Kerala. Further, eight per cent of the workers have decided for an immediate return, while 21 per cent of them wish to settle permanently in Kerala and others wish to return later on.

The study shows that, 27 per cent of local workers do not get sufficient work, and 84 per cent of the local workers believe that Tamil workers have reduced their wage rates. Local workers have no favourable opinion about the working skill, ability etc. of the Tamil workers, but they try to exert superiority complex over the Tamil workers. The most affected group on account of Tamil in-migration is the unskilled workers, especially in the construction sector.
In the case of employers, 61 per cent of the sample prefers locals, but 72 per cent of them are ready to employ Tamils even if locals are available. The study shows that, 53 per cent of the employer negatively discriminate Tamil workers in wage payment due to the lack of efficiency, skills and imperfectness in finishing. Four per cent of them had request from local workers not to employ Tamil workers.

The study disclosed that, employers are also of the view that Tamil workers have reduced employment opportunities as well as the wage rates of local workers. None of the employers in the district have live registration under the Inter-state Migrant Workmen (Regulations of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act 1979 for employing Tamil workers as on March 2006. But, 15 per cent of them have awareness of the existence of such an Act.

Trade union leaders of Kerala show favourable attitude towards Tamil workers. Tamil workers are members in some of the trade unions, 16 per cent of the leaders have conducted trade union activities among Tamil workers, but 20 per cent of them have not yet considered the possibility of trade union activities among the Tamils working in the district. Further, 76 per cent of leaders are of the opinion that Tamil workers have caused reduction in wage rates of locals and 70 per cent of them believe Tamil workers have reduced employment opportunities of locals. Similarly, 10 per cent of them favour for a trade union of Tamil workers, but the rest are against such an organisation. Two leaders belonging to construction sector favour “son-of-soil” approach against Tamils, but 96 per cent of the leaders are against such a movement due to many reasons. Thus there is no immediate possibility of a movement against Tamil workers in Kerala.
Results of hypothesis testing

Three hypotheses were set and tested in this study. The following are the results of hypotheses testing.

1. In-migration has helped Tamil workers to get employment for more days than in their place origin. The hypothesis was found to be correct and thus can be accepted.

2. The Tamil workers monthly average net wages income from the district is more than their expected monthly average earnings of their nativity, if they perform the same or similar kind of work in their nativity without migrating to the district. This hypothesis was found correct and thus can be accepted.

3. In-migration has led to considerable economic and financial improvement of Tamil workers. Since there was significant improvement in different economic aspect, the hypothesis was found correct and thus can be accepted.

SUGGESTIONS

The following measures can be taken to improve the living and working conditions of Tamil workers in the district:

1. Socio–Cultural Organisation In order to help Tamil workers in different ways formation of a socio-cultural charitable organisation under the patronage and support of natives will hold good. This organisation should help Tamils both in times of emergencies as well as normalcy; undertake socio-cultural as well as charitable activities for the benefit and upliftment of Tamil workers. Membership should be given to all the Tamil workers and it should function in a democratic way. Office bearers should be Tamils. While important personalities such as political and trade union leaders, important employers, contractors, philanthropists etc., of the locality where such an
association is formed should be patrons. Ensuring the participation of natives enhances ground support for such an organisation in the district. The organisation should create a fund through nominal subscriptions from members; donations and contributions etc can be collected from Tamils as well as from the natives. This fund can be utilised for extending financial aid to the deserving Tamil workers, especially for medical treatment, expenses to carry dead bodies or sick persons or injured to their nativity, or for legal expenses on good and fair grounds. There should be transparency in the utilisation of the fund. This fund will surely help the Tamil workers of Kerala to stand by themselves and to avoid begging for others’ mercy in case of emergencies or casualties. In addition to this, the organisation should conduct cultural activities, night classes to improve literacy and knowledge for Tamil workers, guidance and counselling as well as temperance classes also to those who show deviant behaviour. In this way the organisation should strive for the all-round development of Tamil workers. For this purpose educated youth among the Tamil workers in the district should come forward. Trade unions of Kerala and of Tamil Nadu can play an important role in such an organisation, but at the same time the organisation shall not be a politically motivated, trade union based one.

2. Self-Help Groups. Exploitations and existence of intermediaries is an important feature of in-migrant labour market segment of Kerala. Even though kangani system is not in prevalence now, but more or less equal systems exist at present also. Different kinds of intermediaries, agents and brokers etc., can be seen, known by different names, mainly maistry. The agent, (maistry) deducts a part of wages and pockets it as well as he gets commission from employers. His only activity is to provide some baskets, shovel etc and control and supervise the gang working under him. If the workers can mobilise the amount required for these items, the amount deducted by the agent from their wages can be saved, and the amount paid by the employer can be divided
among the workers themselves. For this purpose self-help groups of the Tamil workers can be formed, and works can be undertaken jointly on behalf of the self-help group. In this way exploitation of intermediaries and agents can be eliminated as well as workers' income can be increased. For this purpose sufficient help can be expected from the natives.

3. Educational facilities for children of Tamil workers. Some of the parents have left their children in their nativity, who will be looked after by their relatives. But many of them have their children with them. These children, on account of lack of educational facilities, play in the streets in their early years of life, grow as street children, rag and waste pickers, beggars and gradually become child labourers. Child labour is rampant among the Tamil workers and a major part of the child labourers in Kerala is from Tamil Nadu. Similarly many of the Tamil workers have mentioned lack of proper educational facility for children as one of the reasons for not bringing their family into Kerala. Thus, if proper educational facilities are arranged for the children of Tamil workers, incidence of child labour can be reduced, it will help Tamil workers to bring their family into Kerala and engage fully in the state. It is also important to mention that many Tamil children are pursuing their education in different schools of the district. But many fear that in the event of return to nativity they cannot continue education of their children and this will adversely affect their children. Thus measures are to be taken to provide at least primary education to these children in Tamil medium, if necessary.

4. Official documents and helps. Many of the Tamil workers and their families settled in Kerala are in a dilemma. As per official records they have left Tamil Nadu and no more exist, but there is no official record to prove their residential status in Kerala. Thus as per official documents they are nowhere. No official help or concession, or aid either from the state of Tamil Nadu or from that of Kerala is available to these workers. They have no ration cards,
residency records and election identity card also. This creates many problems to them. Thus proper measures shall be taken by the government of Tamil Nadu and also Kerala to recognise them, to provide them ration cards, election identity cards, and other documents. Similarly, various concessions, helps and assistances available to the workers and low income groups of Kerala should also be made available to the deserving Tamil workers in the state. Further, the government officials and all the concerned should have to bear in mind that these are the most important source of manual labour in Kerala and they also deserve helps.

5. **Proper medical and insurance coverage.** Many of the Tamil workers are engaged in dangerous and hazardous occupations. Most of them are always exposed to injuries, casualties and occupational hazards. Thus, they should be provided proper medical facilities and insurance coverage. Similarly before undertaking such jobs, the employees should themselves ensure that, the undertaking is properly insured and should ask the employer for providing proper medical and insurance facilities.

6. **Development of Skills and abilities.** One of the important reasons mentioned by employers for discrimination is the lack of proper abilities and skills as well as lack of perfection in the jobs performed by the Tamil workers. Thus in order to eliminate discriminations and to get the wages paid to the native workers, the Tamil workers should develop proper skills and abilities in the jobs in which they specialise.

7. **Awareness activities.** Drinking is a major deviant behaviour observed among the Tamil workers. Many of them are good drunkards; they destroy their health and the money they earn through hard and difficult jobs. In order to avoid such deviant behaviour, proper guidance, counselling and awareness campaigns should be undertaken. This can be conducted under the auspices of the socio-cultural organisation formed by the Tamil workers. Many charitable organisations in Kerala will help Tamil workers in this respect.
8. Proper implementation of The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979. On account of various loopholes and laxity on the part of authorities in strict implementation of the Act, the basic purpose or objective of the Act is not accomplished. There exist exploitation and discriminations. Thus, loopholes through which culprits escape should be eliminated and the authorities at the helm of affairs should strictly implement or enforce this Act.

9. Trade union Activities among the Tamil Workers Trade unions of Kerala should come to the Tamil workers, consider them as a special wing and should help them in all possible ways. As far as the trade unions of Kerala are concerned, since they are national based and affiliated organisations, there will be no difficulty in extending trade union activities or giving membership to the Tamil workers. Moreover, it is one of the ways to propagate and spread their trade union activities, slogans, political ideas etc. among the Tamil workers as a whole, in the entire state of Tamil Nadu.

Conclusion

The study is a unique attempt to discuss the socio-economic features of Tamil workers in Kerala, causes for migration, their wages, income and employment patterns, working and living conditions, consequences of migration upon themselves and upon the host labour market. Their in-migration is the result of labour related issues. In-migration has helped them to increase their earnings and savings and has led to economic improvements. Even though Tamil workers have adversely affected the wage rates and employment opportunities of certain categories of native workers, especially the unskilled construction workers, the relationship among them is found to be cordial one; but natives exert attitude of superiority over the guest workers. Employers prefer local workers, while they are ready to employ Tamils even if locals are available. Some of the employers negatively discriminate Tamil workers on account of shortage of skills and lack of perfection in their work. Trade union
leaders also show favourable attitude towards the Tamil workers and their problems. The study suggested certain measures to improve their living and working conditions in Kerala. The study thus, highlights the life and economic activities of a community, which so far got little consideration, and is recognition to the workers who have made good of labour deficiency in the state of Kerala.

Areas for further Research

The study opens scope for further research in other aspects of the area. A comparative study of the socio-economic conditions of households of out-migrant workers to Kerala and households of non-migrant workers in the state of Tamil Nadu could be undertaken. This will help to understand the impacts of out-migration in to Kerala. Similarly, in order to study the relative impact of different out-migration streams from Tamil Nadu, a comparative study of the conditions of households of out-migrants to Kerala and household of out-migrants to other states as well as emigrants could be undertaken.

Further, a comparative study of the wage rates and employment patterns of native workers, Tamil workers and other interstate in-migrants in Kerala could be attempted to ascertain the extent of discrimination that exist in the labour market of Kerala. Similarly, a comparative study of the income and employment patterns of inter-state migrants in Kerala, as a whole could also be looked into. In addition to these, a study on child labour in Kerala, with special reference to Tamil children could highlight the extent of child labour in Kerala as well as those from Tamil Nadu.