Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Introduction
- Migration Related Studies
- How the study differs from other studies in this field
- Recent Studies
- Emigrant growth in gulf countries
2.1. Introduction

The studies on migration are of great interest to scholars from very olden times. There are many studies on migration reported so far. There are country specific studies, region wise studies, religion wise studies on migration. Many of these studies tried to measure the number of persons moving to and fro for job and its impact it had on the labour sending countries. There are various international labour migration studies which in general explain the movement of labourers over a period of time. Most of the studies with respect to Kerala on migration is seen to be carried out by the scholars and researchers in the Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram. Many of these studies by CDS are also funded by the various agencies of the Kerala government.

In this study a review is made relating to various aspects of migration, remittances and its impacts in the local market, demographic consequences, economic disparities emerging out of migration, males-female migration, wages of migrants, seasonal migration, analysis of skill mix etc. The literature under consideration here is grouped under a single heading – migration related studies.

2.2. Migration Related Studies
Three states, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh together contribute to about 60% of those who have obtained emigration clearance. In terms of the share of these prominent states, there has been a steady decline in Kerala’s contribution where as the share of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have registered considerable increases. This could also mean that larger numbers of people who are migrating from Kerala are now engaged in skilled/professional related activities in the Middle East where as there is a larger outflow of unskilled labourers who require emigration clearance emigrate from the other states.\(^8\)

There is paucity of information to gauge the magnitude of the return migration. Attempts have been made by researchers to arrive at some macro estimates. Nayyar (1994) estimates that around 131,900 people returned from the Middle East in 1983–86 and 38,000 returned in 1987–90. Zachariah et al (2002c) estimates that nearly 147,000 persons during 1988 to 1992 and around 400,000 during 1993 to 1997 returned to the state of Kerala alone. This study also reports that the current number of return migrants in the state would be around 750,000.\(^9\)

A number of efforts have been made over the past three decades to estimate the number of Keralites working in the
Middle East. The Kerala State Planning Board reports that a total of 1.6 million Keralites were working in the Middle East in 1998 (State Planning Board, 1998). Zachariah et al (2002) estimate the number of emigrants from Kerala in the second half of 1998 as 1.36 million. Although there are differences between the exact quantitative figures, all available estimates attest to the predominance of Keralite labourers in the Gulf region.\textsuperscript{10}

The labour market effects of migration are reported to be significant in relation to major sending regions within the country. Research studies on international migration in 1970s and 80s have shown that migration acted as a safety valve in countering growing unemployment in states like Kerala and in districts like Ratnagiri in Maharashtra. (Abella and Yogesh, 1986\textsuperscript{11} Mowli, 1992\textsuperscript{12} Nair,1988\textsuperscript{13}). The most recent evidence in this regard is reported by the Kerala Migration Study of 1998 (Zachariah et al, 2002). The study notes that the unemployment rates in the state has declined by about 3 percentage points as a consequence of migration.

Remittances, however, have had a considerable impact on regional economies within India. Here again, the most striking case in point is that of Kerala. A recent study (Kannan
and Hari, 2002) concludes that remittances to the Kerala economy averaged 21% of state income in the 1990s. This study also reports that an increase in per capita income as a result of remittances has contributed to an increase in consumption expenditure in Kerala. Although the average per capita consumption in Kerala was below the national average until 1978–79, by 1999–2000 consumer expenditure in Kerala exceeded the national average by around 41%.

Empirical evidence to assess the demographic consequences of international migration from India is limited. Evidence available in the case of Kerala highlights the following:

- Migration has had a direct effect in reducing the population growth in the state since the 1950s. In 1981–91, nearly a fifth of the natural increase of population was removed from the state through migration.

- Migration has reduced the working age population in the state and consequently increased the proportion of children and the elderly. Migration has contributed to the prevalence of large numbers of very small families in the state. Single member households have increased by 33% and two member households by 42% as a result of migration. (Zachariah et al,
Research studies report that migration has had significant consequences on poverty levels. Zachariah et al (2002b) reports that migration has had a very significant impact on the proportion of population below the poverty line in Kerala during the 1990s. The study notes that the proportion has declined by over 3 percentage points as a result of remittances received by Kerala households from abroad. It is important to note that the largest decline has been in the case of the relatively economically backward sections of people belonging to the Muslim community, the decline being over 6 percentage points.

Another prominent impact, which migration, especially, male migration to the Middle East, has had, is in relation to the effects on women left behind. This is especially so in the case of those who are married. A number of studies conducted during the past three decades have concluded that one of the major problems encountered by wives of emigrants is loneliness. The extent of such loneliness is reported to be more severe among younger wives whose husbands migrated immediately after the marriage. Such solitude had given rise to mental tension in the wives of those migrated during the 1970s and 80s. Such mental tensions seem to have been
reduced in the 1990s. This could mainly be attributed to the availability of quicker means of communication, new responsibilities, roles, and leisure activities for women (Zachariah et al, 2002 b).15

Migrants often get lower wages than local labourers. The migrant status of the labourers accounts for 38–56% of the wage differential in Chennai city when other characteristics are accounted (Duraiswamy and Narsimhan, 1997). They work long and odd hours. Moreover the payments are not made on time. Piece rates are mostly prevalent which provide greater flexibility to employers (NCRL, 1991). Of course, migrants may also prefer these wage systems as they can maximise returns on a per day basis, raising the possibility of their saving part of wages. But in many cases organised migration results in credit-labour interlocking, such that the net return to labour may have no relation to wages in destination areas (Singh and Iyer, 198516; Das, 199317; Krishnaiah, 199718; Mosse et al, 200219)

At one end of the migration spectrum, workers could be locked into a debt-migration cycle, where earnings from migration are used to repay debts incurred at home or in the destination areas, thereby cementing the migration cycle. At
the other end, migration is largely voluntary, although shaped by their limited choices. The NCRL has recognised the existence of this continuum for poor migrants by distinguishing between rural labour migration for survival and for subsistence. The landless poor, who mostly belong to lower caste, indigenous communities, from economically backward regions, migrate for survival and constitute a significant proportion of seasonal labour flow (Study Group on Migrant Labour, 1990)²⁰

The major impacts of migration on source areas occur through changes in the labour market, income and assets, changes in the pattern of expenditure and investment. Although seasonal outmigration potentially has the effect of smoothing out employment over the annual cycle, rural outmigration could cause a tightening of the labour market in some circumstances. However, empirical evidence from outmigrant areas does not often attest to this (Connell et al, 1976; Srivastava, 1999)²¹. This may be because outmigration often takes place in labour surplus situations. There is also evidence of the replacement of outmigrant male labour by female and even child labour (Srivastava, forthcoming). Srivastava’s (1999)²² study of seven villages in Uttar Pradesh
showed some variation over regions. While the situation in the study villages in Eastern and central Uttar Pradesh conformed to a situation of labour surplus, this was not the case in Western Uttar Pradesh where seasonal migration coincided with the agricultural peak season (Rabi) and employers complained of labour shortages. Significantly in all the regions studied, labourers on their part gave uncertainty of employment along with employment conditions and poor relations with their agricultural employers as the major reasons for outmigration.

Outmigration as a result of debt at home, or debt-interlocking (i.e. the repayment of debts through advance labour commitment) involving employers in the destination areas or their middlemen, is quite common. Such outmigration may or may not eliminate the causes of debt. The reduction of personalized dependencies or interlocked relationships may also accelerate labour mobility and migration as labourers seek out alternative sources of cash income (Srivastava, 1987; Breman, 1974, 1985; Mosse et al, 1997).

Remittances are mainly used for purposes like consumption, repayment of loans and meeting other social
obligations. These constitute, in effect the ‘first charge’ on migrant incomes. The evidence on investment is, however, mixed. Investment by migrant households on housing, land and consumer durables is common and migrant income is also used to finance working capital requirements in agriculture. Evidence of other productive farm or non-farm investment is scarce but a number of studies do report such investment by a small percentage of migrant and return migrant households (Oberai and Singh, 1983\textsuperscript{26}; Krishnaiah, 1997\textsuperscript{27}; Sharma, 1997\textsuperscript{28}; Rogaly \textit{et al}, 2001). Thus, while studies do not fully discount for the impact of some factors such as the life cycle effect, rural outmigration appears to provide some, albeit slender, evidence of an improvement in the productive potential of source areas, and the ability of some poor migrant households to acquire small surpluses and strengthen their productive base and bargaining strength in the rural economy (cf. Rogaly \textit{et al}, 2001; Srivastava, forthcoming).

There are clearly multiple rationales for the use of migrant labour in destination areas. While shortages of local labour provides one important rationale (Singh and Iyer, 1985\textsuperscript{29}; Oberai and Singh, 1983), virtually all available
evidence shows that recruitment of immigrants is as much motivated by strategies of labour control and wage cost reduction. Numerous cases have been documented where the same areas export and import labour to identical sectors. Migrants are preferred because their labour is easier to control and it is easier to extract labour from them under arduous conditions. Moreover, the supply of labour can be easily increased or decreased with little cost to employers and migrants can work for long and flexible hours. Flexibility of the migrant workforce is reinforced because of the role of contractors and middlemen in recruitment and supervision. The segmentation of the labour market, which also leads to greater control over both migrant and local labour, is another outcome of the process.

Movement of people across national boundaries in South Asia is long standing. Trade, political and religious links have necessitated regular contacts with southeast, eastern and central Asia, and Africa. However, with the advent of colonial rule, international migratory movement entered a new phase. The imperial needs for labour required substantial migration of labour from India to the plantation colonies in the West Indies, Ceylon, Southeast Asia, Mauritius, Fiji and South Africa.
The bulk of these migrants went as indentured labourers. Kingsley Davis estimates that about 30 million Indians emigrated between 1834 and 1947 (Davis, 1951). This scale of movement was as large as the European migration to the Americas in the 19th century. It declined with the ending of indenture in 1921. However, a significant free migration did continue between India and Ceylon, Africa and Southeast Asia. Most of this migration was of unskilled labour.

Analysis of the skill mix of the Indian migrant workers in Middle East labour markets is again difficult because of lack of data. Whatever is available is restricted to rough estimates made by individual researchers on the basis of sample surveys and some figures pertaining to certain periods published by government sources. However, from the available estimates, it can be gauged that the majority of those who migrated during late 1970s and early 1980s belonged to the unskilled and semi-skilled category. One of the studies report that while about two thirds of the migrant workers were semi-skilled or unskilled, only about 14% were employed in professional technical and managerial occupations (Eevit and Zachariah, 1978).
2.3. How the study differs from other studies in this field:

There has been many studies related to migration and its causes and effects since long time as this topic is seen to be an interesting one among many scholars and researchers in this field. There have been many studies on the Non Resident Keralites who works in the gulf countries. The pioneers among these studies were the works of Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. Some of these studies have been funded by the government of Kerala or by the Central Overseas Department to be used as a useful tool for monitoring the movement of migration from Kerala to chalk out policies for the NRKs. Many of these studies looked into the migration monitoring with respect the number of NRKs migrating, problems of the returnees, statistical report of the house holds which sent NRK aspirants to the gulf, problems faced by the families back home etc.

There are many published studies and research report related to migration specific to regions around many countries. When some of the studies discus the income disparities, and trends in migration others focus on the economic impact of migration and domestic mobility of
labour. There has been studies related to UAE with regard to the macro economic impact of migration, gender and migration, but there seems to be no studies done through a direct survey among the labourers in UAE.

This study focus on the satisfaction level of labourers in UAE with special reference to the Non Resident Keralites working in UAE. The study explores the working condition and perception of workers in the various industries they are employed. Data has been collected directly from the labourers who work in the different emirates in UAE. Apart from analyzing the satisfaction level of workers, this will be one such study which for the first time tries to bring out the various issues and problems the workers face. The study also tries to find the awareness level and effectiveness of the Non Resident Keralites Welfare department of the Kerala government.

2.4. Recent Studies:

Some of the crucial studies on Kerala regarding migration have been done by Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Kerala. These studies were consistent from 1998 till 2007. The researcher tries to comprehend useful data from among these migration studies.
The most recent (2007) round of the Migration Monitoring Studies (MMS) was by the Research Unit on International Migration of the Centre for Development Studies (CDSMRU), financed by the Department of Non-Resident Keralite Affairs, Government of Kerala. The CDSMRU conducts periodic sample surveys on migration covering the entire state. MMS 2007, conducted during April-September 2007, was the third in this series. The first one, called Kerala Migration Study (KMS), was conducted in 1998. The second one was conducted five years later in 2003. It was known as South Asia Migration Study (SMS) as it attempted to compare the situation in Sri Lanka, one of the countries in South Asia, which sends large volume of emigrants. According to Migration Monitoring Study (MMS) 2007, the number of Kerala migrants living abroad was 18.5 lakh, more or less the same as the estimate for 2003 made in South Asia Migration Study 2003. Emigration from Kerala seems to have lost much of its steam. The previous two studies on migration had predicted an increase in the number of migrants, but it seems to have failed from the findings of the recent migration monitoring study 2007.

Table: 2.1
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<td><strong>Percent of emigrants in Gulf</strong></td>
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<td>88.9</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>89.0</td>
<td>88.9</td>
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Source: Migration, remittances and employment, Short-term Trends and Long-term Implications, Centre for development studies, Kerala, 2007

In the past, Gulf countries used to be the principal destination of Kerala emigrants. In this matter there has been no change in 2007 also. In 1998, 95 percent of Kerala emigrants went to one of the Gulf countries. By 2003 the corresponding percentage declined to 91 percent. In 2007 the proportion of Kerala emigrants who went to the Gulf region has come down further to 89 percent. However significant changes are observed in the distribution of emigrants within
the Gulf region. Saudi Arabia had been the principal destination country in 1998. By 2003, it yielded its first rank to the United Arab Emirates, which at that time received 37 percent of the total emigrants from Kerala compared to 27 percent in Saudi Arabia.

The UAE continued its dominance and by 2007 it has received 42 percent of the Kerala emigrants. In the meantime, Saudi Arabia's share declined further to just 24 percent. Apart from the UAE, Kuwait also continues to attract an increasing share of Kerala emigrants. Outside the Gulf region, the United States of America is a major destination country. It received 5.7 percent of the total number of emigrants from the state. Its share had been only 2.2 percent in 1998. (See Table: 3.3).

The trend in Keralite emigrant growth in the Gulf countries is plotted here. Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar seems to attract less than United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. It is to be noted here that the rate of increase of Keralite emigrants to UAE is fast growing compared to other gulf countries. (See Fig: 2.1).

**Fig: 2.1**

*Emigrant growth in gulf countries:*
References:


