“Man is a mobile creature, capable of enquiring, susceptible to suggestion, and endowed with imagination and initiative. This explains why, having conceived with the notion that his wants might be satisfied elsewhere, he may decide not merely on going there but also on the means by which his can be achieved.”¹

The word ‘migration’ is derived from the Latin word ‘migrate’, which means to change one’s residence. The Encyclopaedia Americana defines the term as a co-ordinated voluntary movement of a considerable number of people from an accustomed habitat to a new one.² The International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences has defined it as the relatively permanent movement of persons over a significant distance.³ In International Encyclopedia of Population, ‘migration’ is defined as a geographical mobility that involves a change of usual residence between defined political or statistical areas or between residence areas of different types.⁴

Migration is one of the distinguishing features of human beings that has been occurring since it started from the very beginning of man’s appearance in this universe. Though human mobility was the characteristic of even the stone age man, the rapidity of industrialisation and urbanisation of the modern age has given it big push and with the development of modern means of transport and communication, thousands of people in each country –

especially from the third world - started to leave their usual abode in search of new jobs and fresh opportunities.

Migration is one of the causes of social change and it is one of the three basic reasons of demographic change, the other two being birth and death. “Migration is a two – way process; it is a response to economic and social change and equally it is a catalyst to change for those areas gaining and losing migrants.”

A large number of studies have come out regarding migration analysis. Due to different approaches and methodologies used by each investigator and also by varied purposes and perspectives in their analysis the whole migration literature itself has become highly complex.

Theories and Approaches to Migration

Various attempts towards defining the process of migration and the consequent conceptualisation of the phenomena have resulted in the emergence of a number of theories and philosophical approaches. But the review of theories and approaches reveal that so far there has not evolved a framework or theoretical expression that gained universal acceptance.

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6 C.J.Lewis has tried to simplify the problem by classifying the migration process into four categories.a) Spatial migration: This classification is based on the spatial criteria that focuses upon the aerial units between which movements take place. It generally comprises two types of movements – internal migration (movement of people within a nation) and international migration(movement of people across political boundaries). b) Temporal migration: Here the focus is on the length of residence in the host community. Daily, periodic, seasonal and long-term movements are meant by the term. c) Causal migration; Here the distinction is based on the differences in the level of culture and presence or absence of violence. Voluntary and forced migrations are meant here. d) Consequential: Here the distinction is made between the innovating and conservative. (Migrations of people to achieve something new are described as innovative and migration in response to a change in condition and to retain what they have had is conservative. The attempt made by Fairchild to analyse the typology of migration is also note worthy. He classified migration into four types. 1) Invasion of which the Visigoth sacks of Rome is given as the suitable example. 2) Conquest in which “the people of higher culture take the aggressive” 3) Colonization, when “a well established, progressive, and physically vigorous state” settles “newly discovered or thinly settled countries”; and immigration or the individually motivated, peaceful movement between well established countries “ on approximately the same stage of civilisation” (See W. Peterson, ‘A general Typology of Migration’ in Clifford J Jansen (ed), “Readings in the Sociology of Migration”, Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1970, p.49-50.
Though, a comprehensive and widely accepted theory is not evolved, scholars of migration have tried to formulate theories based on various aspects of migration. As regards the genesis of migration, some works concentrate on the decision making of individuals and others focus on society – micro-analytical and macro-analytical respectively. Some other works used the terms humanist and determinist to denote the same. In humanist approach, the individual is the decision maker in the choice whether to migrate or not. In contrast, for the determinist, it is the society where he lives becomes the crucial factor. Still, some other studies have tried to integrate the determinist and humanist approaches. Theories of migration are important in the sense that they help those who study human mobility within wider political, social, economic and cultural contexts.

**Determinist Approaches of Human Migration**

**Empirical Laws**

Ravenstein, a German born former cartographer for the British war office is remembered as the pioneer who formulated a theoretical foundation for the migration study. His hypothesis were first published in the Geographical Magazine of 1876 in which he reacted against the view of an earlier demographer, W. Farr, who remarked that migration occurs without any definite law. Later, Ravenstein published two papers in the Journal of the Statistical Society in June 1886 and June 1889. The first paper was the result of an extensive study of British Census’s Place of Birth Tables of 1871 and 1881 and the second paper on the basis of data from 20 other countries of North America and Europe. A summary of laws as appeared in these papers is given below.

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1. Most of the migrants go only a short distance.

2. Migrants moving long distance generally go by preference to one of the great centres of commerce and industry.

3. Migration proceeds in a series of steps.

4. Urban people are less migratory than rural people.

5. Females are more migratory than males in short distances, but males predominate over long distances.

6. Each migration current produces a compensating counter current, but the former predominates the latter.

7. Families hardly move over long distance.

8. The development of commerce and industry and the improvement of transport facilities lead to increase in volume of migration.

9. Direction of migration is largely from agricultural regions to industrial areas.

10. The important reason behind the decision to migrate is economic.

Though Ravenstein’s laws have attracted critical appraisals from various corners, he remains the pioneer and one of the pre-eminent migration theorist, who started the theory of migration ball rolling, who provided the base upon which subsequent migration research and theorising were put up. Not withstanding, some 20th century scholars have tried to give the laws of Ravenstein some theoretical credence by explaining and verifying the laws on

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the basis of Newton’s Law of Gravity. His law that females are more migratory than males in short migration is not true in many migration streams of various ages and regions. Migration occurring in series is also not having enough base. However as Everett S. Lee rightly remarks, “In the three quarters of a century which have passed, Ravenstein has been much quoted and occasionally challenged. But while there have been literally thousands of migration studies in the meantime few additional generalisations have been advanced. True, there have been studies of age and migration, sex and migration, race and migration, distance and migration, education and migration, the labour force and migration and so forth. But most studies which focused upon the characteristics of migrants have been conducted with little reference to the volume of migration and few studies have considered the reasons for migration on the assimilation of migrants at the destination”.

An important attempt in the field of migration study was made by Zelinsky (1971). He connected the process of migration with the demographic changes and the consequent transformation of society over times. In his ‘Hypothesis of Transformation of Society’ Zelinsky claimed that “there are definite, patterned regularities in the growth of personal mobility through space - time during recent history and the regularities comprise an essential component of the modernisation (migration) process”. His Mobility Transition Model identified five phases. In phase 1, ‘a pre-modern traditional society’, there was limited migration circulation. In the second phase, the early transitional society, which is characterised by high population growth, there will be widespread migration especially rural to urban and an increase in

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10 Everett S. Lee, n.8.
circulation. In phase 3, the society which is in late transitional stage is marked by a reduction in natural decrease in migration and an increase in the volume and complexity of circulation. The fourth phase, the advanced society where natural increase is controlled intra-urban and inter-urban movement replace the rural-urban movement. The last phase, which is described as a post-industrial society, there is a general decline in migration and is displaced by some form of circulation. Ronald Skeldon has criticised Zelinsky on three points. First, the model perpetuated the myth of the immobile pre-modern society. Second, the intent of the mobility hypothesis to relate mobility change to the stages of the demographic transition was never realised. Third, its depiction of migration and development as a unilinear process affects all areas in the same way.¹²

**Capital Maximisation Approaches**

**Neo-Classical Theories**

A number of early theories on migration process surrounds around *neoclassical economics*. According to this, migration occurs as a result of the rational economic calculation of the workers of the wage differentials, which results in the spatial mobility of workers from low-wage to high-wage areas. Migration was thus labour reallocation in response to market need.

It was the experience of high volume of rural-urban migration in 1960s in many developing nations despite rising levels of urban unemployment that tempted Michael Todaro to formulate his theory in 1969. According to Todaro migration proceeds in response to urban-rural differences in ‘expected rather than actual earnings’.¹³ Migrants as decision makers consider the various labour market opportunities available to them as

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between, say, the rural and urban sectors, and chose the one, which maximises their ‘expected’ gains from migration. Expected gains are measured by a) the difference in real incomes between rural and urban job opportunities and b) the probability of a new migrant obtaining an urban job. In short, there are four essential features for Todaro model.

1) Migration is stimulated primarily by rational economic consideration of relative benefits and costs, mostly financial but also psychological.

2) The decision to migrate depends on ‘expected’ rather than actual rural real wage differentials where the ‘expected’ differential is determined by the interaction of two variables, the actual urban-rural wage differential and the probability of successfully obtaining employment in the urban modern sector.

3) The probability of obtaining an urban job is inversely related to the urban unemployment rate.

4) Migration in excess of urban job opportunity growth rates are not only possible but also rational and probable in the face of continued positive urban-rural ‘expected’ income differentials.

The advantage of Todaro model is that it admits the urban unemployment. He also thinks all the rural-urban migration occurs not merely on the basis of expectation or probability. The ignorance of urban situation on the part of the migrant may also lead to migration. One important drawback of Todaro model is that it ignores the non-economic factors.

Arthur Lewis (1954) gave a development touch to the migration theory while considering the process of rural – urban labour transfer. Later the study was formalised and extended by John Fei and Gustav Ranis. (Fei and Ranis
The Lewis – Fei - Ranis (L – F – R) became the received ‘general’ theory of the development process in ‘labour surplus’ Third world nations during most of the late 1950s and 1960s. In the LFR Model, the economy consists of two sectors a) a traditional, ‘rural, subsistence sector’ characterised by zero or very low productivity ‘surplus’ labour and b) a high productivity modern ‘urban industrial sector’ into which labour from the subsistence sector is gradually transferred.

Michael P Todaro has pointed out three handicaps to LFR Model.

1. The Model implicitly assumes that the rate of labour transfer and employment creation is proportional to the rate of capital accumulation.

2. The assumption that surplus labour exists in rural areas and there is full employment in urban areas is also not true.

3. The third key assumption at variance with reality is the notion of the continued existence of constant real urban wages until the supply of rural surplus labour is exhausted.

The theory is interested only in rural – urban migration occurring in a dual economy and it wholly ignores other streams of migration. Further, the subsequent experience of developing countries belied this theory as the industrial sector did not generate sufficient jobs to absorb the migrants from the countryside.

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14 Ibid. p..21.
16 Ronald Skeldon, n.12, p.21.
**Behavioural Decision-making Approaches**

Unlike the previous approaches, which focused on spatial analysis, the behavioural approaches investigate how psychological process of cognition and decision making mediate between the environment and the individual.\(^\text{17}\)

According to Wolpert, migration takes place when the ‘place utility’ in a few location becomes greater than that of the present location. The concept of place utility is defined as “the net composite of utilities which are derived from the individual’s integration at some time and space… May be expressed as a positive or negative quality expressing respectively the individual’s satisfaction or dissatisfaction with respect to that place”.\(^\text{18}\) Wolpert thus became a key figure in the evolution of behavioural approaches. Peoples migrate to a place that provide a high overall place utility than either the origin or alternative destination. The behavioural approach also introduced the concept of ‘stress’. Accordingly, in the present location satisfying human will may put up with hardship or stress to a certain extent. But when the stress crosses this limit he decides to migrate.

Everett S. Lee presented his paper at the Annual meeting of Mississippi Valley Historical Association, Kansas City on 23 April, 1965. In the three quarters of a century since Ravenstein presented his hypotheses, little was the development in the field of migration theory. The sum total of the contributions were a) the generalisations made by Dorothy Swaine Thomas and her associates that migrants tended to be adults and persons in their late teens.\(^\text{19}\) b) Bogue and Hagood summed up the current state of knowledge under the heading ‘An Approach to a Theory of differential

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\(^\text{18}\) Ibid.
migration' and Ottis Durant Duncon wrote a paper on ‘the theory and consequences of farm population.' Most other essays in migration theory have dealt with advance Mathematical formulations of the relationships between migration and distance.

According to Lee there are countless factors in every region, which act to hold people within the area or attract people to it and there are others, which tend to repel them. Lee called them, as ‘pluses’ and ‘minuses’ and the factors to which people take an indifferent stand termed as ‘zeroes’. In addition, he introduced a set of intervening obstacles like distance, cost of transport, immigration laws etc (see figure)

In short, the forces associated with the area of origin and area of destination are in their own way governed by factors like age, experience, skill, sex, education etc which affect individual thresholds and facilitate or retard migration.

He uses this basic conceptualisation of migration that involves a set of origin and destination factors, a set of intervening obstacles and a series of personal factors to formulate a set of general hypotheses about the volume of

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21 Otis Durant Duncan, ‘The Theory and Consequences of Mobility of Farm Population’, Oklahoma Experiment Station Circular no.88 (Still water, Okla, May 1940).
23 Everett S Lee, n.8.
migration, the development of stream and counter stream and the characteristics of migrants. The abstract of his hypotheses are given below.\textsuperscript{24}

\textbf{Volume of migration}

1). The volume of migration within a territory varies with the degree of diversity of areas included in that territory.

2). The volume of migration varies with the diversity of people.

3). The volume of migration is related to the difficulty of surmounting the intervening obstacles.

4). The volume of migration varies with fluctuations in the economy.

5). Unless severe checks are imposed, both volume and rate of migration tend to increase with time.

\textbf{Stream and Counter stream}

1) Migration tends to take place largely within well-defined streams (e.g. From rural areas to nearby towns and towards major cities).

2) For every migration stream a counter stream develops (may be because of disappearance of positive factors at origin or acquisition of new skills or wealth at destination).

3) The efficiency of stream and counter stream tends to be low if origin and destination are similar.

4) The efficiency of migration stream will be higher if the intervening obstacles are great.

5) The efficiency of migration stream varies with economic conditions, being high in prosperous times and low in times of depression.

\textsuperscript{24} Everett S Lee, n.22, Pp. 288-297
Characteristics of Migrants

1) Migration is selective which simply means that migrants are not a random sample of the population at origin.

2) Migrants responding primarily to plus factors at destination tend to be positively selected (e.g. Highly educated).

3) Migrants responding primarily to minus factors at origin tend to be negatively selected; or when the minus factors are overwhelming the entire population groups, they may not be selected at all.

4) The degree of positive selection increases with the difficulty of intervening obstacles e.g. The voyage of the Europeans to North Americas in the 17th and 18th c eliminated many of the weak.

5) The characteristics of migrants tend to be intermediate between the characteristics of population at origin and the population at destination.

The theory put forward by Lee is both simple and valid. Over eighty years after Ravenstein, Everett Lee made an attempt to elaborate a formal ‘theory’ of migration which would provide a schema of the factors that could explain the volume of migration between any two places. But as Michael P. Todaro points out it is difficult to determine which plus factors and which minus factors at both origin and destination are quantitatively the most important to different groups and classes of people. Nor do the existence of intervening obstacles help us to know which are major and which are minor. Thus it offers little practical policy guidance for decision makers in developing nations.

Historical Structural Approach

25 Ronald Skeldon, n.12, p.20
Prominent exponents of this approach are Portes, Balan, Cardoz, Mangalam et al. According to them, any study on migration must “probe into the pressures and counter-pressures both internal and external to the economy which cause changes in the organisation of production.” The Social Organisational Theory put forward by Mangalam (1968) also corroborates to this approach. He sees migration as an agent of social change. According to him, migration is a system with which three elements, society of origin, society of destination, and migrants are inter-dependent and inter-working. In this inter-working, each community undergoes social change which is described as the “difference between social organisation of a given society at two different points of time, comprising changes in any or all the three component systems namely the culture, social and personality systems.”

So migration is not independent endeavours made by individuals; rather it is a part of socio-economic changes that a society experiences. Migration “is an adaptive process whose major objective is maintaining the dynamic equilibrium of a social organisation with a minimum of change and at the same time providing those members ways to overcome the deprivation.”

Though historical approach connect migration to socio-political and economic changes that a society experiences through years it pays no consideration to individual factors in the process of decision-making.

Related to historical structural approach, there is the Marxian structural approach. They assign the forces behind the migration on the hidden logic of the capitalist mode of production. Any explanation of migration cannot rely solely on either measuring characteristics of origin and destination locations, as suggested by the capital maximization model, or concentrating on the actions and priorities of individuals, as suggested by the behavioural model.

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28 Ibid, p.15.
Primary attention must be paid to how the capitalist economy operates and evolves overtime.\footnote{Paul Boyle et al, n.17, p.68.}

**System Approach**

Some have conceived migration as a system in which migration is viewed as circular inter-dependent and self-modifying system in which the effects of changes in one part has a ripple effect through the whole system.\footnote{G.J.Lewis, n.5, p.29.} Mabogunje, after his study of rural – urban migration in Africa has presented a paper ‘A System Approach to a Theory of Rural – urban Migration’ (1970). According to him migration system is made up of three basic element; Firstly, the migrant who is urged to leave the rural sector by incentives from the surroundings. Secondly, there are certain institutions that control and direct the degree of migration flow. Thirdly, various social, economic and political forces which play major role in the process.\footnote{A.K. Mabogunje, ‘System Approach to a Theory of Rural – Urban Migration’, Geographical Analysis, 2 (1970), Pp.1 – 18.} Although Mabogunje’s study is concerned with rural – urban migration in Africa, the conceptualisation has a wider application.

Taylor’s Migration Zone Theory is based on his study of diffusion of population from the cradle land of Central Asia, which lies near the Caspian and Aral seas. According to this theory, the first settlers were born in this cradle land and with the origin of later races in this area the former migrated to the outside area forming the marginal fringe of central core. In this hierarchy, first of all the Negrito evolved which was forced to migrate towards the periphery by the Negro who evolved later on. Later on Australoid evolved, which forced former two to migrate towards the periphery. In this way several races were evolved and migrated all over the world. In support of his theory, Taylor has made the following propositions.
1) There has been a centrifugal movement of population from Central Asia to its nearest peninsulas e.g. Eurafrica, Australia and the Americas.

2) There are several racial zones in each and every continent, which is primitive as far as we go away from Central Asia, which give clear-cut evidences of successive migrations of people in each every continent.

3) Primitive races are found in the peripheral areas e.g. Negritoes are found in Tansania, Cape Colony, Green Land, and Brazil. This shows the successive migration of Negrito people to the peripheral areas of the world.

Stouffer formulated the theory of intervening opportunities in 1940. By asserting that the “degree of migration would be inversely related to the distance between the two places as also the extent of intervening opportunities, but directly related to the opportunities in the two places”.32 He criticised the Zipf formulation of distance. He further argues “there is no relationship between mobility and distance….. the number of persons going over a given distance is directly proportional to the number of opportunities at that distance and inversely proportional to the number of intervening opportunities. The relation between mobility and distance may be said to depend on an auxiliary relationship, which express the cumulated (intervening) opportunities as a function of distance”.33

Another experiment in the field of migration research was made by Charles H. Wood(1982) of Florida University. His attempt was to incorporate Equilibrium and Historical Approaches. Exploring the possibility of an integration Wood says “the theoretical proposition of the equilibrium model specifies the economising behaviour that takes place in a given market.

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33 Ibid.
context; the historical structural perspectives stresses a dynamic view of the overall structure of the economy and of the social and political matrix that constitute the context within which economising behaviour occurs. The former refers primarily to individual choices, while the latter refers to the structural condition that makes certain choices possible. In principle it is clear that an understanding of population movement must encompass both the determinants of the parameters of behaviour and the factors that motivate individual actors”.34 Wood presents a conceptual framework that attempts to integrate individual and structural approaches to the study of migration by shifting the unit of analysis to the households. The households adopt a series of sustenance strategies of dynamic nature to meet its consumption necessities, the labour power at its disposal and the alternatives for generating monetary and non–monetary income. Migration or geographic mobility of some or all of its members is one of the central component of such strategies. “When some of monetary and non–monetary income is sufficient to reach or increase the desired quantity and quality of consumption and investment, seasonal and permanent migration is unlikely to occur.”35

A short survey of various approaches to migration studies is presented above. A single approach is not sufficient to explain the complex phenomena of West Asian migration from Malabar or the state of Kerala. Since the study is a historical analysis, historical – structural approach is given more importance though off and on elements of other approaches are also used in explaining the process as and when needed.

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35 Ibid.