

Socio - Economic Impact of Female Emigration from Kerala - A Case Study of Mallappally and Kumbanad Panchayats

OPEN ACCESS

Volume: 6

Special Issue: 1

Month: November

Year: 2018

ISSN: 2319-961X

Impact Factor: 4.005

Citation:

Priyadarsini, J. "Socio - Economic Impact of Female Emigration from Kerala - A Case Study of Mallappally and Kumbanad Panchayats." *Shanlax International Journal of Economics*, vol. 6, no. S1, 2018, pp. 46-52.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1488511>

J.Priyadarsini

Assistant Professor, Economics Department

D.B.Pampa College, Parumala

Migration is a term that encompasses a wide variety of movements and situations that involve people of all walks of life and backgrounds. More than ever before, it touches all states and people in an era of deepening globalization. It is intertwined with geopolitics, trade and cultural exchange, and provides opportunities for states, businesses and communities to benefit enormously. It has helped improve people's lives in both origin and destination countries and has offered opportunities for millions of people worldwide to forge safe and meaningful lives abroad. Migrants' remittances have multiple effects in the economy of the mother country. (IOM, World Migration Report, 2018)

Since the 1980s labor migration, especially of women, has grown fast in the Asian region, represents the fastest growing form of it (Iredale and Guo 2000). The increasing feminization of migration is illustrated with the fact that about 1.5 million Asian women were working abroad in the mid-1990s ([seerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download...](http://seerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download)). It is an empowering process for women regarding high self-esteem and economic independence in the family and Society. Which provides an economic lifeline for these migrants and it becomes a strategy for them to maintain better living conditions for their families. Now women constitute half of the emigrants. They mostly work in domestic services, entertainment, nursing and teaching.

According to the World Migration Report in 2003, almost half of the estimated 175 million migrants worldwide are women; this phenomenon is termed as feminization of migration. Many women including young women migrate independently as the main strategy for survival to support themselves and their families. Women go abroad to serve families of higher social status, while they pass their own family earning role to other family members or less privileged women in their countries of origin. Migration is a transforming experience for women. The emigration of women effected changes in the socio-economic structure and status of their family to a great extent. It led to a total change in the standard of living, lifestyles, decision making regarding savings, spending pattern, education of their children, health consciousness of the households, etc. The purpose of this study is to enquire the socio – economic impact of female emigration from Kerala

on them and their family. Though it has both positive as well as negative implications, this study focuses on the positive aspects of it. Thus the two panchayats of Pathanamthitta district- Kumbanad and Mallappally were selected as the study areas because they are the pocket districts of female emigrants, mainly skilled category women (Nurses).

Objectives

1. To analyze the socio-economic conditions of female emigrants' and their families before emigration
2. To examine changes in the socio-economic status of female emigrants' and their families after emigration.

Theoretical Overview

Most of the theories on migration treat it as an integral part of the development process of a Country. In Ravenstein's theory, it is a consequence of economic development. Both neoclassical and new economics approaches highlighted the role of it in the transformation of traditional rural societies into towns and cities through modernization.

Review of Studies on Migration

Over the years, several researchers contributed to the literature on the diverse experiences of woman migrants as short- term contract workers, permanent residents or migrants through marriage. Migration is a complex process. The Studies on the international mobility of females is relatively limited and mostly focusses on the movement of less skilled female migrants. A large number of skilled female migrants compared to males enter through the family routes. They are mostly well informed with relevant information about their destination market and are most secure in their rights and entitlement than the unskilled. There is thus an evident gap in the literature on skilled female migration. Majority movements of people have occurred over the last few centuries, thus it has a very long history. (Koser 2007). The United Nations Statistics division and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) represent two valuable sources for migration statistics. The IOM is probably the most comprehensive resource for determining the extent of migration between countries. Reflecting global trends, women from South Asia have consistently accounted for almost 40 to 45% of its total international migrants over the last one decade (UNDESA 2008). Raghuram (2004) notes that skilled female migrants how to accompany their spouses many benefits by taking advantage of the opportunity for training and further study or many find work when entering a country as a dependent emigrant. Kofman (2011) notes that women constituted about half of all migrants in the UK in 2002. Verges Bosch and Gonzales Ramons (2013) in their study of how family considerations influence skilled female migration in Spain finds that a negative type cast of the 'trailing spouse' is too stereotypical. Women are increasing following their independent professions or pursuing further education in the context of family migration.

Table of Female migrants as a percentage of international migrants

Region	1990	2000	2010
Africa	46.2	46.7	46.8
Asia	45.4	45.7	44.6
Europe	52.7	52.8	52.3
Latin America and the Caribbean	49.7	50	50.1
North America	51.1	50.5	50.1
Oceania	49.1	50.2	51.2
World	49.1	49.4	49.0

Source: Timothy and Sasikumar (2012)

In the table, it is clear that the share of female migrants in International migrants has been hovering around 50% for the past two decades in all the regions. It is higher in regions containing traditional immigration countries namely Europe North America and Oceania than those of the typical immigration continents such as Africa and Asia.

Remittances

Studies found that more than half of their income from abroad had been used for daily consumption, health care, and children's education. It also provides a decent livelihood to other members of their families. Along with a strong obligation towards own and extended family, some of them are conscious about their future and save a portion of the remittance by keeping them in the bank or purchasing insurance and investment bonds. All of these have a high social and economic return. In the absence of women migrants, usually the income is utilized by the family. If migrants are married these are used by their husbands and if they are unmarried, it is used by the parents or elder siblings. Due to lack of opportunists as well as lack of information on available avenues for investment, women migrants can hardly keep control over their remittances. However, women developed their mechanisms of saving for future during subsequent migration. Bank and Nonbank financial institutions of Asian sending countries are yet to come up with gender-sensitive investment opportunists. Along with remittances, skills, ideas, attitudes, knowledge and independent decision making capacity are other positive aspects of female migration. These are termed as social remittances. Migrant women's knowledge brings positive result in her household and community in many ways. According to UNFPA (2006), such knowledge leads to an improved state of family health.

Demand for Nurses

The migration of nurses has been the dominant mechanism through which the nursing workforce has been shored up, with developed countries recruiting nurses from developing countries (seerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download...). Empirical analysis of the pattern of nurse migration to the United Kingdom showed that between 1990 and 2001 there was a significant increase in the number of countries sending nurses there. In 1990 nurses came from 71 countries, but by 2001 they came from 95 countries. Between 2001 and 2002 for the first time, there were more overseas nurses added to the register in the United Kingdom than there were local nurses. These 16,000 international nurses came in large number from Australia, India, the Philippines, and South Africa. While growth in the number of foreign nurse registrants from the Philippines has been the most dramatic, other sources of nurses (most of the countries in Africa) have also experienced a notable increase. Nurses are leaving the public health systems of African countries that were former British colonies for the British National Health System, where starting pay is \$31,000 a year. In May 2004, at the annual assembly of the World Health Organization, African countries urged developed nations to compensate them for their lost investment in training nurses, and won a pledge to study ways to reduce the damage from the emigration of nurses. (seerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download...).

Results of the Field Study

Among the rankings of female emigrants from 14 districts of Kerala, Kottayam district ranks first with 17.33%, and Pathanamthitta district ranks second with 13.88%. Thus the two pocket panchayats -Mallappally and Kumbanad (Koipuram Panchayat) of Pathanamthitta district chosen for the primary survey.

Migration and its Socio - Economic Effects

Though women in Kerala as a whole enjoy better status in comparison to their counter parts in other regions of India, their position in the study area of Mallappally and Kumbanad panchayats were also very high position. This panchayat was predominantly populated by Christians and few Hindus. These panchayats were economically average before emigration. The emigration of a huge number of females exposed these

women in an entirely different economic situation. A large- scale exodus of female emigrants to the Gulf countries led to high economic prospects to the skilled categories of females (General and BSc Nurses). Thus the study focused mainly on female nurses.

Religion- wise distribution of Female Emigrants

Religion	Number	Percentage
Christian	69	92%
Hindu	6	8%
Muslim	0	0
Total	75	100

Source: Primary data

A Remarkable feature of this study is that more than 92% of Malayali nurses are Christians. A numerical minority gets socially and educationally remarkably powerful group the Christians of Kerala - who account for close to 20% of the population, emerged as the most deserving candidates for the profession. From the table it is clear that, in the total, about 92% of female emigrants belong to a Christian community, only 8% female emigrants belongs to Hindu community. No Muslim female emigrant found in this survey.

Table of Income status of Female Emigrants

Income Level	Before emigration	Percentage
Jobless/ unemployed	18	24%
Below 10000	30	40%
10000 – 20000	21	28%
20000 – 30000	5	6.67%
30000 – 40000	0	0
40000 and above	1	1.33%
Total	75	100

Source: Primary data

Nurses from this panchayat belong to social backgrounds which are rather homogenous. The Majority of the nurses is from the middle- income group, fathers in these household posses' modest qualifications and is self-employed. Few of them have been worked up abroad. Majority (40%) of them received only below 10000. About 28% received a salary of 10000 to 20000. Only 6.67% received salary of 20000 to 30000. Only 1.33% received an income of 40000 and above. But 24% were unemployed before emigration.

Table of Income status of Female Emigrants

Income Level	After emigration	Percentage
Below 90000	20	26.66%
90000 – 1.4 lakhs	20	26.66%
1.4 lakhs - 1.9 lakhs	21	28%
1.9 lakhs – 2.4 lakhs	10	13.33%
2.4 lakhs and above	4	5.33%
Total	75	100

Source: Primary data

In the table, it is clear that about 26.66% of the female emigrants belong to the income level from 90000 to 1.4 lakhs. About 28% receive the salary ranging from 1.4 lakhs to 1.9 lakhs. 13.33% received 1.9 lakhs to 2.4 lakhs. Only 5.33% receive a peak level salary of 2.4 lakhs and above. Thus these skilled groups received very high salary by working abroad and it resulted in an improvement in the socio-economic status of female emigrants as a whole. Work experience of Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore hospitals act as an added experience for working in the hospitals abroad. Many private Agencies are active in the process of direct recruitment of nurses from Kerala to the Gulf region. In few cases nurses have to pay an amount equal to two- three month salary, they would get in the prospective hospitals in the Gulf region by way of commission for placement. Well established agents clinch most of their contracts with the best hospitals.

Table of Number of Houses and Vehicles

Number of Houses	Number of Vehicles	Total Number	Percentage
1	1	69	92%
2	2	6	8%
More than two	More than two	0	0
Total		75	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table, it is clear that about 92% of female emigrants have only one house and one vehicle and only 8% have two houses and two vehicles.

Source of Income	Number	Percentage
Remittances send by female emigrants	68	90.66%
Rental Income	2	2.66%
Pension of Households	0	0
Savings of parents	3	4%
Parents income	2	2.66%

Source: Primary data

It can understand from the table that the source of family income of majority female emigrants is their remittances from abroad itself. It is about 90.66%. About 4% are using their savings for meeting all expenses. About 2.66% of households are using rental income and income from their occupation. Nobody is receiving pensionary income.

Conclusion

Thus Migration has changed the role of feminism in their families and communities. These women are playing two different roles like recipients and managers of remittances. Beyond financial remittances, the social remittances of migrant women such as ideas, skills, attitudes, knowledge, etc.), and promoted socio-economic development, human rights, and gender equality. Historically, the economic condition of Kerala was very poor in the 1960s. The Gulf boom in the 1970s and their remittance inflow towards Kerala, transformed it completely. (<http://www.allresearchjournal.com/>). It was also understood that emigration of workers for the construction works was peak in 1970s. After finishing that sort of developments a new era of skilled workers migration was started to the hospitals, companies, and other IT constructive site in Gulf for better prospects. It has led to a total change in the standard of living, lifestyles, decision making regarding savings, spending pattern, education of their children, health consciousness of the households, etc. They have acquired so many skills while working abroad. They learned new languages like English, Arabic, Hindi, etc.

References

- Abrar, C.R. (ed.). (2000) *On the Margin: Refugees, Migrants, and Minorities*. Dhaka: RMMRU.
- Afsar, R., Yunus, M., & Islam, S. (2000) *Are Migrants Chasing after the Golden Deer: A Study on Cost-Benefit Analysis of Overseas Migration by Bangladeshi Labour*. Geneva
- Andrew Gardner and Sharon Nagy, "INTRODUCTION: New Ethnographic Fieldwork Among Migrants, Residents and Citizens in the Arab States of the Gulf," *City & Society*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2008), pp. 1-4;
- Karen Leonard, *Locating Home: India's Hyderabadis Abroad* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).
- A Passage to Hope, Women and International Migration, State of World Population 2006, Available at <http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/sowp06-en.pdf>. Accessed on May 23rd, 2016
- ArunaShanbaug. The Woman who triggered the Euthanasia Debate in India. Posted by Factly, 2015
- Asis Maruja 2005, International migration and the prospect of gender equality paper presented at the expert group meeting on International Migration and Millennium developments goal, Marrakesh, Morocco, 11-12, May, 2005
- A Women and Gender Studies Reader, Philippine Copyright © Miriam College – Women and Gender Institute (WAGI), 2008, 42.
- Betty R, Ferrell, Nessa C. *The nature of suffering and the goals of Nursing*, Oxford Scholarship, 2008. ISBN-13: 9780195333121
- FilippoOsella and Caroline Osella, "I am Gulf!": The Production of Cosmopolitanism in Calicut, Kerala," in Edward Simpson and Kai Kresse, eds., *Cosmopolitanism Contested: The Confluence of History and Anthropology in the Indian Ocean* (London: Hurst, 2007); and Caroline and FilippoOsella, "Muslim Dress: Negotiating Fashion, Ethnicity and Decency in Kerala, India," Emma Tarlo and AnneliesMoores, eds., *Fashion Theory*, special issue (2007).
- George S. When women came first: Gender and Class in Transnational Migration, Berkley: University of California Press, 2005, 41
- Gulati L. Asian women Workers in International Labour Migration' in Anuja Agarwal edited *Migrant Women and Work*, Sage Publications, 2006, 4.
- International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research. Sucharitha Publications. 2014; 1(3):3 2.
- Shekhar TV. *Migration and Social Change*. Jaipur: Rawat Publication. 1997.
- IOM, *World Migration Report*, 2018
- Kathmandu. Mannan, M.A. (2001) *Bangladeshi Migrants in Saudi Labour Market: An Empirical Analysis* (vernacular), RMMRU, University of Dhaka, Dhaka.
- Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).
- LeelaGulati, *In the Absence of Their Men* (New Delhi: Sage, 1993); Caroline Osella and FilippoOsella, "Nuancing the Migrant Experience: Perspectives from Kerala, South India," in Susan Koshy and R. Radhakrishnan, eds., *Transnational South Asians: The Making of a Neo-diaspora* (London: Routledge, 2008); and K.C. Zachariah, E.T. Mathew, and S. Irudaya Rajan, *Dynamics of Migration in Kerala: Dimensions, Determinants and Consequences* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2003).
- Marie Percot, "Indian Nurses in the Gulf: Two Generations of Female Migration," *South Asia Research*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (2006), pp. 41-62
- Michele R. Gamburd, *The Kitchen Spoon's Handle: Transnationalism and Sri Lanka's Migrant Housemaids* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).
- Migrant Forum in Asia, "2009 Women Migrant Workers in the UAE:
- Not Quite in the Portrait, http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/MigrantForumAsia_UA....
- Percot M, Rajan IS. Female Emigration from India: A Case Study of Nurses, *Economic and Political Weekly*. 2007; 42(4):318-325.

Rajan S, Irudaya, Surendran S. Understanding Female Emigration: Experience of House Maids, in S. Irudaya Rajan (ed.) Governance and Labour Migration: India Migration Report Routledge, New Delhi. 2010, 182-195.

Reserve Bank of India (RBI). ‘Remittances from Overseas Indians: Modes of Transfer, Transaction Cost and Time Taken’; RBI Monthly Bulletin, 2010, 779-796.

Sheba Mariam George, *When Women Come First: Gender and Class in Transnational Migration*(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

Websites

(<http://www.allresearchjournal.com/>)

([www.seerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download...](http://www.seerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?seq=6078&context=pdf))

(www.mei.edu/content/malayali/migration...)