

Has Emigration Influenced Kerala's Living Standards?

A Micro Level Investigation

The impact of job migration on households across Kerala has its impact on a greater flow of remittances from abroad, which in turn leads to improved living standards and increased consumption levels. More long-term changes, as this paper emphasises, are related to education. Higher educated workers spend more time abroad, while for the women, an increased access to education also leads to improved health indicators – a decline in the overall birth rate and a lowering of infant mortality rates.

SUSHANTA K BANERJEE, V JAYACHANDRAN, T K ROY

I Introduction

Export of manpower has already been established as one of the most lucrative industry in Kerala. A good number of economically motivated young people all over the state were motivated to more in the direction of the oil rich countries in quest of their fortune, and acquired further momentum through the liberal economic policies of countries of the Persian Gulf since 1970s. This flow of emigration has never been interrupted, not even at the time of economic recession of 1980s and gulf war during the 1990s. Naturally, in a short while the export of manpower from Kerala became an important component of state revenue and the livelihood of millions.

Whatever may be the 'push and pull' factors, this type of migratory movement has a far-reaching impact on the migrant household in the micro level and also on the society and economy in the macro level. In the micro level, emigration brings about changes in the status of the household, firstly, through the active impact of the regular inflow of remittances, ideas, attitudes and global messages from the destination and secondly, through the passive impact of physical absence of a young household member in the origin. On the one extreme, injection of foreign money induces the native household to change their consumption, savings and investment pattern in order to achieve a better standard of living through the increased awareness on health, child care and family size. On the other extreme, physical isolation of

husband and son enforces wife and parents of the migrant households to take an active role to care of all economic and social obligations inside and outside the four walls – in terms of paying off loans, constructing new house, purchasing land, supervising children's education and health. Thus, it is apparent that in addition to remittances emigration can also have beneficial effect on the migrant household members by opening up their mind and providing them a broader perspective of the outer world [Gulati 1993].

At the macro level, emigration neutralises the trade deficit in the country's balance of payment through the inflow of foreign remittances. Even today the state Kerala alone constitutes a healthy share of country's total foreign remittances. This huge amount of workers' remittances not only offsets the widening of the trade deficit but indirectly sustains the overall economy of the state. This seems to be an important reason that although the state has been suffering from acute economic stagnation in terms of agricultural and industrial development with negative growth of per capita income, the proportion of population below the poverty line declined surprisingly from 48 per cent in 1977-78 to 17 per cent in 1987-88 [CMIE 1992]. At the same time, Kerala's ordering in terms of per capita consumption expenditure has ameliorated from 10 in 1970-71 to 4 in 1988-89 [Issac 1992]. Thus, an invisible power is operating in the economy which has tempted authors to consider a positive association between emigration and living standards as a reasonable hypothesis. However, the term living standard in its

widest sense does not merely mean the economic well-being, it rather includes the socio-demographic behaviour of the household members in terms of their fertility behaviour and health scenario [Roy et al 1999; Banerjee 1999]. Much of our understanding of the characteristics and impact of emigration in Kerala has always been restricted to economic dimension [Prakash 1978; Mathew and Nair 1978; Sekhar 1993]. Although Gulati (1993) has made an effort to examine the linkage between demographic components and emigration the whole study was restricted on few case studies only.

Keeping this view in mind, this article attempts to shed light on the questions, what has been the socio-economic consequences of emigration and how is it likely to affect the long-term demographic behaviour of the native household through improvement in their standards of living? Here an attempt has been made to provide some suitable answers to these questions by exploring the living standard of the migrant vis-a-vis non-migrant household, with the supposition that a stronger positive association between emigration and living standard will emerge. Hence, this paper makes an exploratory attempt to study the above hypothesis at a micro level, i.e., taking a household as a unit of analysis. As most of the decisions regarding savings, investment and consumption are made by the household, it is worthwhile to look into the impact of remittances on the household rather than the individual.

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-I) provides an excellent opportunity to undertake such a study. The nationally

representative sample survey was conducted in 25 states that include more than 99 per cent of the country's population. In Kerala, 4,387 households were interviewed using a uniform questionnaire with additional state specific questions on the extent of international migration and remittances from abroad [PRC and IIPS 1995].

II Nature and Characteristics of Emigrants from Kerala

The NFHS includes two specific sets of question about emigration from Kerala. First set deals with the extent and nature of emigrants whereas the second one oversees the perceived change in economic status of households due to the inflow of remittances from abroad. In this regard, a common question has been asked to all 4,387 households: Does any member of this household work outside India? Out of the 4,387 households interrogated in Kerala, 1,011 (23 per cent) households have been observed to have at least one person who had at some point or another emigrated abroad and among them 909 households (21 per cent) were reported to have at least one member abroad at the time of survey.

This surprising proportion of emigration is not at all new in Kerala. Emigration from Kerala began in an immense way from the early 20th century. During this period, the movement, however, was restricted to Malaya, Sri Lanka, Singapore, East Africa and Caribbean islands [Joseph 1988] and continued until 1930 – the onset of the Great Depression. The outflow of workers from Kerala further started at a very low pace by the end of second world war with some new destinations, viz, US, UK, Africa as well as the west Asia [Madhavan 1985]. The momentum of outflow, however, reached in its peak during the second half of the 1970s [Birks and Sinclair 1980]. The spectacular increase in oil revenue after 1973 led all oil-rich countries in the Gulf region to import manpower from the neighbouring countries in order to create new base of domestic industries. Since then people from Kerala have continuously been moving towards Gulf region. The number of Keralites in west Asia has been estimated to be more than 3 lakhs [DES 1987]. According to NFHS (1995), a healthy share of (96 per cent) emigrants from Kerala has been migrated towards west Asia. In this respect, Saudi Arabia emerged as the largest reservoir of

emigrants from Kerala (38 per cent), followed by United Arab Emirates (26 per cent), Oman (12 per cent), Bahrain (7 per cent), Qatar (4 per cent), USA (4 per cent) and Kuwait (2 per cent). The movers are thus fully concentrated only into the few pockets of the west Asian countries.

Who Are the Emigrants?

The emigrants are overwhelmingly male (93 per cent) with a high concentration of young workers (see Table 1). Almost 80 per cent of the current emigrants are in the age group of 25-44 years. The mean age at the time of emigration varies around 29 years for the last 10 years. In case of recent emigration (less than two years of duration of stay in abroad), the mean age at the time

of emigration is slightly higher than those emigrated 10 years back. Emigrants are overwhelmingly married (82 per cent). However the marital distribution varies in its degree from 30 per cent never married among recent emigrants to 4 per cent among those emigrated 10 years back. Around 10 per cent of the emigrants are the spouse (mostly husband) of the head of the household in their native and this increased to 18 per cent in case of long duration migration. On the other extreme, 45 per cent are found to be either the son/daughter, or son-in-law/daughter-in-law of the head of household. This proportion further varies from 55 per cent among recent emigrants to 32 per cent among those emigrated 10 years back. Rest of the emigrants are either brother/sister/brother-in-law or other

Table 1: Characteristics of the Current Emigrants by Duration of Stay (in Years)

Characteristics	< 2	2-4	5-9	10 +	Total
<i>Age at emigration</i>					
< 24	22.3	30.0	29.7	37.1	8.9 ¹
25 - 34	53.3	48.5	55.2	50.2	43.5
35 - 44	20.7	18.2	12.9	11.0	35.7
45 +	3.7	3.3	2.1	1.7	12.0
<i>Mean age</i>	29.9	29.0	28.5	26.9	34.0
<i>Sex</i>					
Male	94.2	92.5	94.1	89.4	92.8
Female	5.8	7.5	5.9	10.3	7.2
<i>Marital Status</i>					
Currently married	69.3	74.1	92.3	95.9	81.7
Never married	30.4	25.3	7.7	4.1	18.3
<i>Religion</i>					
Hindu	36.2	37.3	40.1	32.3	36.5
Muslim	45.1	41.6	37.6	43.0	42.1
Other	18.6	21.1	22.3	24.4	21.4
<i>Literacy</i>					
Illiterate	2.1	2.4	4.5	3.8	3.3
Literate primary	30.2	27.1	24.0	26.1	27.0
Mid complete	50.4	53.3	46.7	41.2	48.2
High school +	17.3	17.2	24.7	28.9	21.5
<i>Occupation</i>					
Professionals	7.6	11.1	12.5	20.6	12.5
Clerical	22.6	25.6	27.5	36.8	27.6
Production	57.0	51.5	49.1	36.1	49.1
Other	12.9	11.7	10.8	6.5	10.8
<i>Relationship with the HH head</i>					
Wife/husband	7.1	5.1	9.4	17.9	9.5
Parents	42.0	38.6	23.7	16.8	31.1
Father-in-law/mother-in-law	13.4	12.3	14.3	15.8	14.1
Brother/sister	23.1	23.8	26.8	27.5	25.1
Brother/sister-in-law	6.6	7.2	13.2	11.0	9.2
Other ²	7.9	12.9	12.5	11.0	11.0
<i>Region³</i>					
North	20.2	22.3	20.2	24.7	21.9
Central-north	30.2	27.4	25.1	22.7	26.6
Central-south	22.6	21.7	26.1	26.5	23.9
South	27.0	28.6	28.6	26.1	27.6
<i>Sent remittance⁴</i>					
Yes	33.1	43.7	41.5	47.4	40.7
No	66.9	56.3	57.8	51.9	59.3
Number of migrants	381	332	287	291	1291

Notes: Eleven emigrants are excluded due to the missing information on duration of stay.

1 Current age of the emigrants.

2 Grandfather/son/son-in-law/other relatives.

3 Origin of the emigrant; North: Kannur, Kozikode and Wayanad;

North-Central: Malappuram, Palakkad and Idukki; Central-South: Thrissur, Ernakulam and Kottayam;

South: Alappuzha, Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram.

4 During the 12 months preceding the survey.

HH: Household.

distant relative of the head of the household in their native.

During the pre-independence period these emigrants were largely from the Malabar region only. By 1970 the proportion of emigrants from this region alone accounted for around 65 per cent of the total emigrants from Kerala [Joseph 1988]. But in the present context the regional distribution of emigrants from Kerala are more or less uniform. Largest share of outflow has been accounted from the southern zone (28 per cent), followed by central-north (27 per cent), central-south (24 per cent) and northern zone (22 per cent). Districtwise distribution of the current emigrants, however, show an overwhelming majority in case of Malappuram district (21 per cent), followed by Kannur (15 per cent), Thrissur and Kollam (11 per cent by each). Barring few (Wayanad and Idduki), people from all districts are thus attracted to foreign jobs irrespective of their educational background. Although most of the emigrant workers from Kerala are found to be literate, only 22 per cent of them have just managed to complete their schooling. This figure, however, is better among the long duration migrants. It reveals an interesting association between the educational level and duration of stay in abroad. For instance, in case of recent emigration (less than two years of duration) only 17 per cent emigrants have been observed to have a high school degree as against 29 per cent in case of long duration emigrants (more than 10 years). The reflection of this phenomenon can also be observed in terms of occupational engagement. The largest single group of workers is in production sector (49 per cent). It comprised the entire spectrum of construction employees: skilled and unskilled labourers for the construction of building and road, skilled craftsmen, dock workers, miners and unskilled industrial labourers. The second largest group is employed in the service sector as office clerk, peon, sales worker, hotel staff, sweeper and cook. Thus an overwhelming majority of the emigrants can be observed in the field of unskilled activities. However, the occupational status of the emigrants who are living abroad for last 10 years is comparatively better than the recent-migrants. This may be because the better the occupational status of the emigrant the longer is the duration of stay in overseas. This fact can better be explained from the findings of Table 2. Here it is very interesting to note that the proportion of

migrants who returned back to their native land among the professional workers are much less (12 per cent) than their low paid unskilled counterparts which include production (15 per cent), household and household duties and firm-fishing activities (19 per cent). At the same time, the mean duration of stay abroad for the professional workers is eight years as against around five years in case of production workers and three years for other workers.

The emigrants are overwhelmingly Muslims (42 per cent) followed by Hindus (37 per cent) and Christians (21 per cent). In case of returning migrants also, Muslims have a marginal edge over others. On an average 13 per cent Muslims have returned during the last 10 years as against 11 per cent of Hindus and 10 per cent of Christians. However, the mean duration of stay abroad among the returning migrants is higher for Muslims (eight years) compared to Hindus and Christians (six years). It thus implies a constant returning and departing of workers from Kerala. However, the pace of returning does not always depends on the nature of occupation in the destination but also on the economic and political situation of the destination. For instance a largest share of emigrants (28 per cent) returned from Kuwait during the last 10 years. This is only because a huge number of workers were evacuated from Kuwait on the eve of Gulf war [Issac 1992]. On the other extreme, only 2 per cent of the emigrants have been reported to have returned from US as against 14 per cent in case of Qatar and 13 per cent in case of Saudi Arabia. Unlike other emigrants (particularly who are moving towards developed countries), the emigrants from Kerala thus can be portrayed as a semiskilled/unskilled young man with a low level of education and occupation who has moved temporarily, leaving behind his nearest kin in order to accumulate wealth for his household.

II Emigration and Household Status

As has been mentioned earlier, emigration brings about changes in the status of the household firstly, through the physical absence of a young member and secondly, through the inflow of foreign remittances. All these changes can be analysed into three different dimensions, viz, (i) physical changes, (ii) economic changes, and (iii) socio-demographic changes. In order

to understand these changes migrant households (household with at least one emigrant) have been compared with the non-migrant households.

Physical Status

Physical status includes age, sex, mean household size and religion of head of the household. According to Table 3 a wide variation can be observed among the migrant and non-migrant households in terms of the sex of the head of the household. As has been expected the female head-ship rate among the migrant household (29 per cent) is much higher than its non-migrant counterpart (17 per cent). Physical absence of male member has not only influenced the sex but also the age

Table 2: Proportion Returning and Mean Duration of Stay by Background Characteristics of the Emigrants

Characteristics	Proportion Returning	Mean Duration of Stay (Years)	
		Migrant	Return Migrant
<i>Religion</i>			
Hindu	11.2	6.1	5.9
Muslim	13.3	6.1	7.5
Other	9.8	5.9	6.3
<i>Occupation</i>			
Professional	12.3	8.2	8.3
Clerical	17.2	7.1	9.3
Production	14.6	5.2	5.1
Other*	18.6	3.2	2.5
<i>Place of destination</i>			
S Arabia	13.2	4.6	5.5
Bahrain	9.0	5.3	4.0
Kuwait	27.9	4.8	7.3
Qatar	14.3	7.4	12.4
US	2.0	11.3	NA

Note: * Includes household duties, farm/fishing.

Table 3: Characteristics of the Household/Head of the Household in the Migrant and Non-Migrant Households

Characteristics	Migrant HH	Non-Migrant HH
<i>Sex of the HH head</i>		
Male	70.7	82.9
Female	29.3	17.1
<i>Religion of the HH head</i>		
Hindu	38.4	64.3
Muslim	39.4	12.9
Other	21.9	22.8
<i>Age of the HH head</i>		
< 30	5.1	5.9
30-44	36.1	35.2
45-59	30.2	34.3
60 +	28.6	24.5
<i>Median age HH</i>	48.6	48.0
<i>Mean household size</i>		
Hindu headed HH	4.8	4.8
Muslim headed HH	6.9	6.2
Other	4.6	4.7
Total	5.6	5.0
<i>Number of households</i>	1011	3376

distribution of head of the household. On an average the head of a migrant household is six months older than the head of a non-migrant household. The ageing of the head of the household is quite clear in case of 60+ population. For instance 29 per cent of the head in the migrant household has been recorded in the age group of 60+ as against 24 per cent in case of non-migrant household.

Distribution of household heads by the religion again exhibits an overwhelming majority of Muslim emigration. Although Muslim constitutes 19 per cent share of the total headships in Kerala [PRC and IIPS 1995] the share has increased to 39 per cent in case of migrant households. The reverse is true in case of Hindus and Christians.

Age Structure, Sex Ratio and Size of the Household

The sex ratio and age structure of migrant households clearly reveal the physical absence of young male members. In migrant households on the average 1,178 females can be observed per thousand male members as against 1,034 females in case of non-migrant households (see Table 4). The difference would be more pronounced if we consider only the young age group (15-29). In the age group 15-29 the sex ratio among migrant households (1,359) is substantially higher than non-migrant households (1,030).

A similar line of difference can also be observed in terms of age structure. The contribution of male members in the age group 15-49 is much higher among the non-migrant (54 per cent) household in comparison with the migrant household (46 per cent). If the flow of young migration continues in the existing manner, it will invariably inflate the peak of the age pyramid in the migrant household.

It is in contrary to our expectation that the mean household size among the migrant household (5.6) is larger than the non-migrant household (5.0). This is because Muslims with larger household size are greater in number among migrant household.

Economic Status

Migration of workers always has a far-reaching impact on the household economy. Inflows of foreign money as well as goods are the vital source of income for majority of migrant households. This flow

of remittances not only brings about changes in the consumption pattern of the households in the short run but influences them to invest the rest in the form of economic assets for the long run. The National Family Health Survey has recorded 47 per cent of households with at least one migrant who received remittances from abroad during the last 12 months prior to the survey [PRC and IIPS 1995]. However, the most important question that emerges is the extent to which these remittances influence the household economy. Do they

Table 6: Utilisation of Remittances (Property Acquired) by the Households according to Migrants Duration of Stay

Property Acquired	< 5 Years	5-9 Years	10+ Years	Total
Land	27.8	(46.5)	51.7	40.6
House	51.4	(51.2)	71.7	58.3
Shop/business	4.2	(-)	6.7	4.0
Car/van	-	(-)	1.7	0.6
Gold/jewellery	27.8	(25.6)	36.7	30.3
Other	20.8	(20.9)	16.7	19.4
Number of households	72	43	60	175

— : Less than 0.05 per cent.

() : Based on 25-49 cases.

Table 4: Per cent Distribution of Population by Age and Sex and Sex Ratio, according to Migration Status of the Household

Age	Migrant HH			Non-Migrant HH		
	Male	Female	Sex Ratio*	Male	Female	SexRatio*
0-4	12.6	11.5	1070	8.2	7.4	930
5-14	25.6	20.8	955	21.3	20.3	986
15-29	25.3	29.2	1359	29.5	29.4	1030
30-49	20.7	23.6	1343	24.6	25.9	1089
50-64	9.5	9.6	1186	10.7	10.7	1030
65 +	6.3	5.4	1012	5.7	6.3	1150
Total	100.0	100.0	1178	100.0	100.0	1034

Notes: NA: Not Applicable.

Females per 1,000 males.

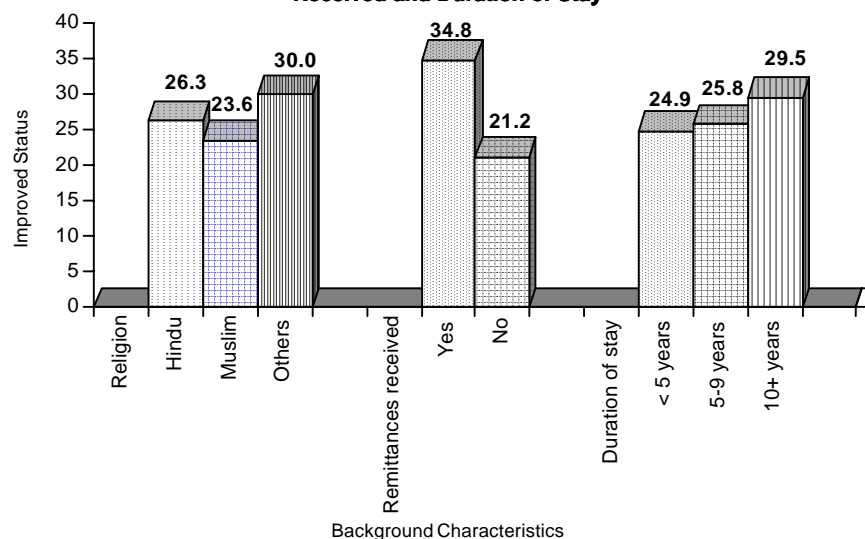
Table 5: Perceived Economic Change in the Household during the Past Five Years by Background Characteristics of the Household Head, according to Migration Status of the Household

Background Characteristic	Migrant HH				Non-migrant HH			
	Improved	Same	Worsened	Number of HH	Improved	Same	Worsened	Number of HH
<i>Sex</i>								
Male	249.9	48.4	26.7	715	14.0	56.0	29.9	2798
Female	29.1	54.7	15.9	296	8.5	51.0	40.3	578
<i>Age</i>								
< 30	30.8	61.5	7.7	52	9.5	60.8	29.6	199
30-44	26.6	47.7	25.5	365	14.1	58.9	26.8	1189
45-59	25.6	48.2	26.2	305	14.3	54.1	31.6	1157
60 +	25.3	53.6	21.1	289	10.7	50.1	39.1	828
<i>Religion</i>								
Hindu	26.3	51.3	22.2	388	12.5	57.1	30.4	2170
Muslim	23.6	52.7	23.6	402	8.7	58.8	32.5	437
Other	30.0	44.1	25.9	220	17.3	47.9	34.8	769
<i>Education</i>								
Illiterate	24.2	53.4	22.4	161	6.0	51.7	42.3	762
Literate, < middle	22.9	51.0	25.9	625	11.1	57.2	31.6	2028
Middle complete	31.3	42.7	26.0	96	21.9	56.2	21.9	283
High school +	40.3	48.1	11.6	129	36.0	49.5	14.5	303
<i>Type of house</i>								
Kuchcha	10.9	52.9	36.1	119	4.9	54.5	40.6	800
Semi-pucca	24.7	51.8	23.5	575	12.1	56.9	31.0	2016
Pucca	34.4	46.4	18.9	317	28.7	49.8	21.5	558
<i>Area of land</i>								
No land	22.2	51.0	26.6	621	10.9	54.9	34.1	2386
< 1 acre	29.1	49.5	21.4	206	14.5	59.5	26.0	565
1-5 acre	34.1	49.4	16.5	164	22.5	51.2	26.3	373
5 + acre	*	*	*	20	32.7	48.1	19.2	52
<i>Remittance received</i> ***								
No	21.2	48.8	30.0	486	NA	NA	NA	NA
Yes	34.8	52.7	12.3	423	NA	NA	NA	NA
<i>Duration of stay</i>								
< 5 years	24.9	49.9	25.2	543	NA	NA	NA	NA
5 - 9 years	25.8	50.8	23.0	244	NA	NA	NA	NA
10 + years	29.5	50.4	20.1	224	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total	26.1	50.2	23.5	1011	13.1	55.2	31.7	3376

NA: Not applicable; * : Percentage not shown, based on fewer than 25 cases.

** Households with only return migrants are not included.

Figure 1: Perceived Improvement in the Household by Religion, Remittances Received and Duration of Stay



improve or maintain the same or worsen the economic status of these households? In this regard, Table 4 provides a clear insight about the perceived economic change in the households during the past five years by background characteristics of head of the native households.

Among migrant households (including returning migrants) 26 per cent household heads perceive improvement in their economic status as against 13 per cent in case of non-migrant households. This figure has further increased to 35 per cent when migrant households received remittances during the last one year (Figure 1). The extent of improvement among the migrant households, however, is largely influenced by the emigrant's duration of stay abroad. Around 30 per cent of the migrant households perceived improvement in their economic status when at least one of the household member has been working abroad for more than 10 years. It is thus, the stability of an emigrant that plays a crucial role in influencing the economic status of the native households. This may be because of two reasons firstly, emigrant workers (mostly the unskilled labourers) rarely get chance to save foreign money in the initial phase of their joining in abroad and secondly, even if they send money it goes primarily for paying back their old loans what they have taken before their emigration.

The background characteristics of the head of the household also proposes some variations in terms of perceived economic status. The most important characteristics in this regard is the educational background of head of the household. Among the highly

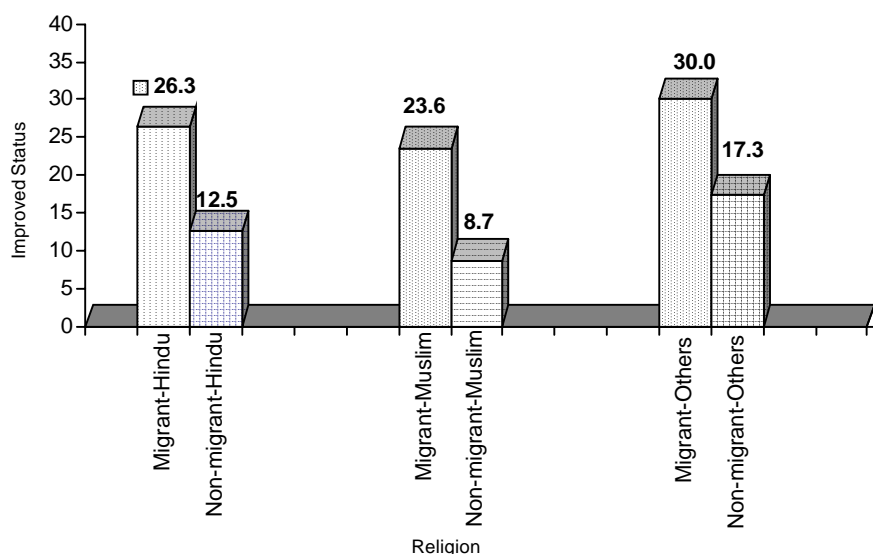
educated heads 40 per cent do perceive an improvement in their economic status in case of migrant households as against 36 per cent in case of non-migrant households. This little difference, however, does not clearly mean the positive impact of foreign remittances which is more perceptible in case of households with illiterate

heads. For instance, among the illiterate heads 24 per cent of the migrant household perceived improvement in their economic status, which is four times higher than their non-migrant counterparts. Around 42 per cent illiterate heads who did not have any emigrant in their household perceived that their economic situation has worsened during the last five years as against only 22 per cent in case of the household heads who have at least one emigrant abroad. An interesting line of difference can also be observed by the sex of the head of the household. Around 29 per cent of the migrant households headed by a female have perceived improvement in their economic status as against 25 per cent in case of their male counterparts. A reverse picture can be observed in case of non-migrant households. Around 40 per cent of the non-migrant households as against 16 per cent of the migrant households headed by a female recognised that their economic status has deteriorated during the last 5 years. Thus in the physical absence of a young male member, female head of a migrant household bears a challenging responsibility in terms of financial management of the household.

Table 7: Economic Characteristics of the Migrant Households by Duration of Stay (in years), and of the Non-Migrant Households

Characteristics	Migrant HH by Duration of Stay				Total	Non-Migrant HH
	< 2	2-4	5-9	10 +		
<i>Land holding</i>						
No land	68.0	56.9	60.6	59.2	61.5	70.6
< 1 acre	17.6	23.5	22.3	17.9	20.3	16.8
1-5 acres	13.3	17.7	14.8	20.1	16.3	11.1
5 + acres	1.0	2.0	2.4	2.9	2.0	1.5
<i>Type of house</i>						
Kuchcha	18.3	9.8	12.0	5.4	11.8	23.7
Semi Pucca	59.3	62.0	53.7	51.3	56.9	59.8
Pucca	22.3	28.2	34.3	43.3	31.4	16.5
<i>Source of drinking water</i>						
Piped/hand pump	6.7	6.5	9.7	11.5	8.4	11.2
Well water	75.3	76.9	75.5	72.5	75.1	57.5
Other	5.7	5.1	2.6	2.3	4.1	10.1
Electricity						
Yes	69.0	78.0	82.4	88.3	78.7	54.7
No	31.0	22.0	17.6	11.7	21.3	45.3
<i>Sanitation</i>						
Flush toilet	75.3	80.0	85.2	92.1	82.6	56.6
Other	3.0	2.6	2.1	1.3	2.3	4.7
No facility	18.7	14.9	10.6	5.4	12.9	34.0
<i>Fuel used for cooking</i>						
Wood	89.0	87.1	81.5	74.6	83.5	88.6
Kerosene	3.0	2.7	2.3	4.2	3.1	3.7
Liquid petroleum gas	7.0	8.2	14.4	19.6	11.9	5.7
Other	1.0	2.0	3.1	1.7	1.6	2.1
<i>Mean number of persons per room</i>	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.5
<i>Consumer durable</i>						
Radio	63.3	75.3	76.9	84.2	74.2	55.6
Television	18.3	21.6	33.8	45.0	28.8	16.4
Refrigerator	13.3	14.5	19.4	35.0	20.1	7.3
Motorcycle/scooter	9.3	5.5	11.1	12.5	9.5	4.2
Car	0.7	2.7	4.2	5.8	3.2	1.4
Water pump	16.0	20.7	26.9	37.5	24.5	8.9
<i>Number of households</i>	304	239	244	224	1011	3376

Figure 2: Perceived Improvement in the Household by Religion



Evaluation of perceived economic status of head of the households by their religion also throws an interesting insight into the matter. For all religions the perceived rate of improvement among the migrant households is much higher than their non-migrant counterparts (Figure 2). It, however, varies in its degree from one religion to the other. Although 58 per cent of the migrant households headed by Muslims have been reported to get regular remittances from abroad only 24 per cent of them perceived improvement in their economic status as against 30 per cent and 26 per cent in case of Christian² and Hindu, respectively. However, if we compare the scenario with the non-migrant households the perceived economic changes among the Muslims would show better improvement than the Hindu and Christian community. For instance, among the non-migrant households headed by Muslims, only 9 per cent respondents perceive improvement in their economic status which is one-third of the migrant households.

It is again with our expectation a positive association can be observed in between asset holding (land and house) and the perceived improvement in the household economy. The comparison between migrant and non-migrant households thus clearly points out the positive impact of emigration on the economic status of the household. However, the perceived figure of improvement among migrant households what has been reported by head of the household seems to be an understatement. Only 26 per cent of the respondents of the migrant households thought that

their economic condition has improved. Remaining 74 per cent of the respondents do feel either no change or further deterioration of their economic condition. It is very difficult to avoid the possibility of gross understatements in the reported figure of improvement. This may be because of two reasons, firstly, for most of the cases respondents may not be willing to disclose information on capital accumulation through foreign remittances, and secondly, the heads of the households may not always be getting information about capital accumulation through foreign remittances.³ This would be clear from Table 6, which provides information on utilisation of remittances in terms of asset accumulation. In this respect all heads of the migrant households were asked: Did your household acquire any asset or property from the remittances from abroad? Only 175 (19

per cent) out of 909 households who had currently at least one migrant reported that they have purchased assets or property. This low response rate can again be considered as an understatement of the actual. However, from Table 6, we can understand the investment pattern of the migrant households.

Investment Pattern of the Migrant Households

Construction of own house has been reported as the most preferred choice of investment among the migrant households. Around 58 per cent of the households invested the remittances in the construction of their own house and the proportion has further increased to 72 per cent in case of long duration migration. The migrant households also have a strong tendency to invest remittances in land (41 per cent) and gold/jewellery (30 per cent). Beside these, remittances have also been invested in business (6.7 per cent) and personal car (2 per cent). However, in all these cases duration of stay abroads plays a vital role to influence the pattern of investment.

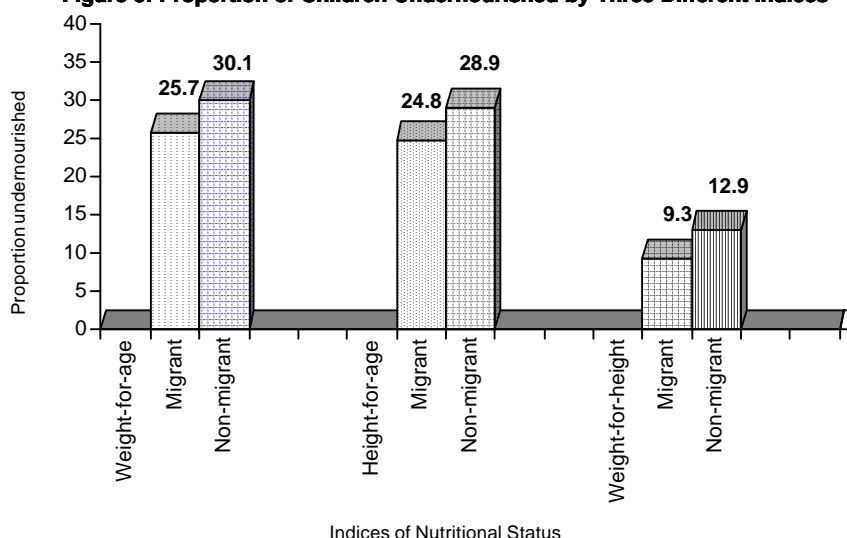
Economic Characteristics of the Migrant Household

In order to understand the changing economic status and living condition of households in detail, the possession of land, type of house, electricity, source of drinking water, modern sanitation facility and consumer durable goods have been accounted for all households in Kerala (Table 7). It can be observed that 38 per cent of migrant households possess land as against 31 per cent in case of non-

Table 8: Mean Number of Children Ever Born (CEB), Children Living (CLIVE) and Ideal Family Size (IFS) by Background Characteristics of the Mother, According to the Migration Status of the Household

Characteristic	Migrant HH				Non-migrant HH			
	CEB	CLIVE	IFS	Number of Women	CEB	CLIVE	IFS	Number of Women
<i>Age</i>								
< 30	1.6	1.5	2.8	530	1.4	1.4	2.3	1097
> 30	3.3	3.1	2.8	605	3.2	2.9	2.7	1746
<i>Place of residence</i>								
Urban	2.3	2.3	2.5	283	2.5	2.3	2.5	832
Rural	2.6	2.4	2.9	852	2.5	2.3	2.6	2011
<i>Education</i>								
Illiterate	4.8	4.4	3.8	110	3.6	3.1	3.0	463
Lit, < middle	3.1	3.0	3.3	409	2.8	2.7	2.7	1055
Middle complete	1.8	1.7	2.7	311	2.0	1.9	2.3	725
High and above	1.6	1.6	2.2	305	1.6	1.6	2.2	600
<i>Religion</i>								
Hindu	2.1	2.0	2.3	368	2.3	2.2	2.4	1793
Muslim	2.9	2.8	3.5	574	3.1	2.9	3.3	464
Other	2.0	2.0	2.4	193	2.5	2.3	2.6	586
Total	2.5	2.4	2.8	1135	2.5	2.3	2.6	2843

Figure 3: Proportion of Children Undernourished by Three Different Indices



migrant households. A clear supremacy among the migrant households can also be observed in terms of the capacity of land holding. Almost 31 per cent of the migrant households possess pucca houses as against 16 per cent of the non-migrant households. This figure has jumped to 43 per cent in case of long duration migration. At the same time migrant's houses are less crowded than their non-migrant counterparts. On an average one person occupies one room in case of migrant households as against 1.5 persons in case of non-migrant households. Around 79 per cent of the migrant houses have electricity as against 55 per cent in case of non-migrant houses. The proportion has again improved with the emigrant's duration of stay abroad. As far as the sanitation facility is concerned, 83 per cent of the migrant households use modern sanitation facilities (flush toilet) as against 57 per cent in case of the non-migrant households. Although, wood is the most common fuel used for cooking (87 per cent) in Kerala, a substantial difference has been recorded among migrant and non-migrant households in terms of the use of liquid petroleum gas. Almost 12 per cent of migrant households use liquid petroleum gas for cooking. This figure has further improved with the emigrant's duration of stay abroad. In this regard, 20 per cent migrant households who have at least one person abroad for last 10 years use liquid petroleum gas as against only 6 per cent in case of non-migrant households.

Possession of consumer durable goods also portrays a better living style among the migrant households. An overwhelming majority can be observed among

migrant households in terms of possession of a number of consumer durable goods, viz, radio (74 per cent), television (29 per cent) and refrigerator (20 per cent). In case of personal transportation facility 13 per cent of migrant households have access either to motorcycle or personal car as against 6 per cent in case of non-migrant households. Beside these, 25 per cent of migrant households have a personal water pump as compared to 9 per cent in case of non-migrant households.

Thus in general the economic condition of the migrant households is much better than its non-migrant counterparts. Now the crucial questions are what would be the socio-demographic consequences of this improved economic status and more specifically how is it likely to affect the long-term demographic behaviour of the migrant households? The section attempts to provide some suitable answers to these issues.

Socio-Demographic Status

Three different aspects have been examined under the broad heading of socio-demographic status of the households. They are: (i) actual fertility and fertility preference, (ii) nutritional status and health of the children and (iii) utilisation of maternal health care.

Fertility and Fertility Preference

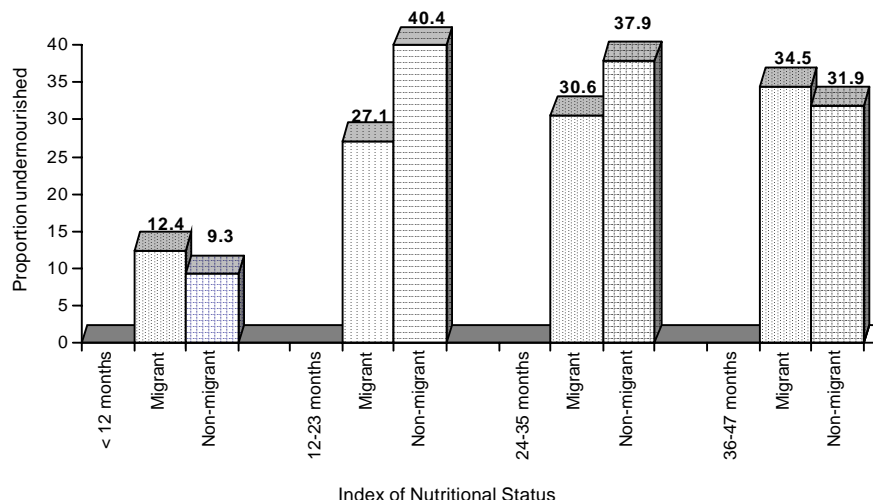
There are several reasons why the emigration of young members would be expected to be associated with the fertility behaviour of the women in the migrant households. A set of factors associated with emigration, viz, increasing exposure to modern ideas and believes, acculturation to modern fertility norms, better living

Table 9: Percentage of Currently Married Women Who Have Ever Used Any Contraceptives by Specific Method, Age, Religion and Education, According to Migration Status of the Household

Category	Any Method	Any Modern Method	Pill	Coper T/ IUD	Condom	Female Sterilisation	Male Sterilisation	Any Traditional Method	Other	Number of Women
<i>Currently Married Women in the Migrant HH</i>										
<i>Age</i>										
13-29	53.4	41.3	11.1	8.7	20.2	15.8	0.4	26.0	0.2	530
30-49	76.7	66.3	10.9	9.4	20.7	43.1	5.6	35.2	1.0	605
<i>Religion</i>										
Hindu	84.0	73.9	12.5	11.1	27.7	46.7	5.2	37.5	1.1	368
Muslim	48.8	39.4	11.0	5.7	13.6	18.6	1.7	20.7	0.4	574
Other	81.9	63.2	8.3	15.0	26.9	34.2	3.6	48.7	0.5	193
<i>Education</i>										
Illiterate	53.6	49.1	4.5	4.5	5.5	37.3	5.5	15.5	-	110
Lit, primary	61.1	51.8	11.2	6.4	11.5	34.0	3.4	21.3	0.7	409
Mid complete	63.7	52.4	9.3	8.4	23.5	25.4	3.5	31.8	0.6	311
High school +	78.7	62.6	14.8	15.1	34.8	28.2	1.6	48.5	0.7	305
Total	65.8	54.6	11.0	9.1	20.4	30.4	3.2	30.9	0.6	1135
<i>Currently Married Women in the Non-Migrant HH</i>										
<i>Age</i>										
13-29	65.7	53.8	5.4	15.2	19.8	30.9	1.1	27.9	0.2	1097
30-49	86.8	76.9	4.8	6.5	14.7	56.0	12.1	33.6	0.8	1746
<i>Religion</i>										
Hindu	82.2	72.2	5.2	10.4	17.3	49.0	9.3	31.7	0.8	1793
Muslim	56.9	48.3	5.2	6.0	10.6	33.6	3.2	18.1	0.2	464
Other	85.0	70.8	4.1	11.5	19.7	48.2	7.1	40.8	0.2	586
<i>Education</i>										
Illiterate	74.5	69.1	2.4	3.7	3.9	54.4	12.5	17.9	0.2	463
Lit, primary	77.8	71.2	3.6	6.5	10.7	52.2	11.7	22.7	0.5	1055
Mid complete	78.9	65.4	4.8	13.8	19.4	44.8	4.3	35.4	0.9	725
High school +	83.0	64.7	9.7	15.8	33.7	31.5	2.0	52.2	0.5	600
Total	78.6	68.0	5.0	9.9	16.7	46.3	7.9	31.4	0.5	2843

-: Less than 0.05 per cent.

Figure 4: Proportion of Children Undernourished by Age



holds is slightly lower than the non-migrant counterparts.

Fertility behaviour based on the educational levels of the mother also portrays some variations among migrant and non-migrant households. It is interesting to note that in case of illiterate mothers the average number of children born in the migrant household (4.8) is higher than its non-migrant counterpart (3.6). The same is true for the mothers who just have completed their primary education. However, in case of educated mother, the migrant households have either lower (those who completed middle school) or same (those who completed high school) level of fertility in comparison to non-migrant households.

Analysis by place of residence also reveals lower fertility among migrant

condition with new economic order, changing responsibility of women in the absence of their male counterparts and the disruption of marital union can always influence the fertility behaviour of the women in the migrant households. In order to understand this dimension, fertility behaviour among the migrant households in Kerala has been compared with the non-migrant households (Table 8). In contrast to our hypotheses, the findings of Table 8, however, reveals no such expected difference between migrant and non-migrant households in terms of average number of children ever born (CEB). For both the cases (migrant and non-migrant households) the mean children ever born is 2.5. However, without statistical control of background factors, such as religion, age and education, conclusions for migration-fertility relationship is incomplete. In this regard, cross analysis by religion offers a little but clear variation among the migrant and non-migrant households in terms of their fertility behaviour. For all the religions mean number of children ever born among migrant households is lower than their non-migrant counterparts. The difference is more pronounced in case of Christian community. In case of Christians, on an average 2 children have been recorded among the migrant households as against 2.5 among the non-migrant households. However, among the migrant households the average number of children born for Muslims is much higher than for Hindus (2.1) and Christians (2.0). A same line of marginal variations can also be observed in case of fertility preferences. Except Muslims the ideal family size (IFS) among the migrant house-

Table 10: Percentage of Children under Four Years of Age Classified as Undernourished by Three Anthropometric Indices of Nutritional Status and Demographic Characteristics, according to Migration Status of the Household

Characteristic	Percentage of Children Below						Number of Births
	Weight-for-age		Height-for-age		Weight-for-height		
	-3 SD	-2 SD	-3 SD	-2 SD	-3 SD	-2 SD	
<i>Migrant HH</i>							
<i>Sex</i>							
Male	3.0	24.2	6.5	24.2	0.4	8.7	231
Female	6.0	27.0	9.9	25.4	1.2	9.9	252
<i>Residence</i>							
Urban	4.2	15.8	5.8	19.2	2.5	10.8	120
Rural	4.7	28.9	9.1	26.7	0.3	8.8	363
<i>Child's age</i>							
< 12 months	0.8	12.4	3.9	11.6	0.8	7.0	129
12-23 months	5.3	27.1	6.8	27.8	0.8	12.0	133
24-35 months	7.4	30.6	13.0	31.5	0.9	11.1	108
36-47 months	5.3	34.5	10.6	30.1	0.9	7.1	113
<i>Education</i>							
Illiterate	(-)	(48.5)	(21.2)	(39.4)	(-)	(12.1)	33
Lit, primary	8.4	31.8	11.7	31.8	1.3	11.0	154
Mid Complete	5.4	26.5	6.8	26.5	0.7	9.5	147
High School+	0.7	13.4	3.4	12.8	0.7	6.7	149
<i>Religion of HH head</i>							
Hindu	2.5	16.9	0.8	15.3	0.8	11.0	118
Muslim	5.8	31.2	12.3	31.2	0.7	9.6	292
Other	2.7	17.8	4.1	15.1	1.4	5.5	73
Total	4.6	25.7	8.3	24.8	0.8	9.3	483
<i>Non-migrant HH</i>							
<i>Sex</i>							
Male	6.6	31.1	8.4	28.0	1.3	14.1	454
Female	7.5	29.1	10.6	29.8	1.7	11.5	416
<i>Residence</i>							
Urban	2.0	26.3	3.2	22.7	2.4	12.6	247
Rural	9.0	31.6	11.9	31.3	1.1	13.0	623
<i>Child's age</i>							
< 12 months	1.4	9.3	2.9	14.7	0.6	6.0	208
12-23 months	9.9	40.4	10.8	34.1	3.1	20.2	223
24-35 months	9.9	37.9	11.6	31.9	2.2	16.4	232
36-47 months	6.3	31.9	12.6	35.7	-	7.7	207
<i>Education</i>							
Illiterate	10.3	38.1	14.4	39.2	2.1	15.5	97
Lit, primary	10.3	39.5	12.7	38.5	1.7	12.4	291
Mid Complete	5.1	26.8	8.5	26.5	1.5	12.5	272
High School +	3.3	17.6	3.8	13.8	1.0	12.9	210
<i>Religion of HH head</i>							
Hindu	7.5	31.8	8.6	27.8	1.4	13.5	510
Muslim	7.8	30.6	7.2	29.4	2.8	12.8	180
Other	5.0	25.0	13.9	31.1	0.6	11.1	180
Total	7.0	30.1	9.4	28.9	1.5	12.9	870

-: Less than 0.05 per cent.
(): Based on 25-49 cases.

households in the urban area whereas in the rural area the mean number of children ever born among the migrant household is marginally higher than the non-migrant counterparts. Thus although migrant households have achieved better economic standards through the inflow of foreign remittances, its manifestation in the process of family formation is not readily seen. The difference between migrant and non-migrant households in terms of fertility behaviour has not been portrayed in our findings. The small family norm is deep rooted in Kerala, and the fertility behaviour of Keralites is perhaps indifferent to such a change. There is a need for more in depth analysis considering duration of migration and controlling age and few other socio-economic characteristics of migrants and non-migrants to examine the issue.

In Table 9, we present the extent of use of contraception among the women in migrant and non-migrant households. The proportion of use of any contraception is slightly higher among women in non-migrant households compared to those in migrant households. The former rely more on sterilisation whereas the use of spacing methods particularly oral pill is considerably higher among women in migrant households. Among older women (30-49) the per cent of users of modern spacing method is 41 among women in migrant households compared to 26 among those in non-migrant households.

Nutritional Status and Health of the Children

In the modern scenario, health of children is regarded as a most comprehensive indicator of quality of life. Out of 25 million children born in India in every year, around 2.7 million die before reaching the age of 5 years [UNICEF 1997]. A healthy proportion of these children die not only due to the medical and biological reasons, but also due to the prevalence of acute malnutrition. That is why, nutritional status of the children has gained widespread acceptance as one of the most important indicator of 'living standard'. Keeping this view in mind, here an attempt has been made to assess the nutritional status of the children among migrant and non-migrant households with an objective to understand the respective living standard of the households.

In this respect, height and weight of the children under four years of age has been collected in order to estimate three sum-

mary indices of nutritional status. The indices are following: (i) weight-for-age, (ii) height-for-age, and (iii) weight-for-height. The indices are represented in standard deviation units (z-scores) from the median for the international reference population. Children who fall more than two standard deviation below the reference median are considered to be undernourished, where as those who fall more than three standard deviations have been considered to be severely undernourished [PRC and NFHS 1997]. Table 10 displays the indices separately for migrant and non-migrant households by controlling some selected socio-demographic characteristics.

The weight-for-age is one of the most important indicators of nutritional status which infers both chronic and acute undernutrition among the children due to poor and insufficient food intakes, unfavourable environmental conditions. According to this criterion about 26 per cent of the children in the migrant households are underweight as against 30 per cent in case of non-migrant households (Figure 3). On the other hand, around 5 per cent of the children in the migrant households are found to be severely under-nourished in terms of their desired weight. This figure has further increased to 7 per cent among the non-migrant households.

For both the households malnutrition varies in its degree according to the age of children and reaches its peak mostly in

the age of 24-35 months. However, it is very interesting to note that the incidence of malnutrition for the children below 12 months of age is comparatively high among migrant households. Analysis by the sex of the children however, reveals better nutritional status among male children and is more pronounced among the migrant households.

The same of line of variations can also be observed by the education of mother and religion. In this regard, malnutrition declines steadily with the education of mother. In case of non-migrant households only 18 per cent of the children are under weight when mothers are highly educated as against 13 per cent in case of migrant households. Analysis by religion again reflects high incidence of malnutrition among Muslims. For Muslims a little difference can be estimated among migrant and non-migrant households. However, in case of Hindus and Christians the variations are more clear among migrant and non-migrant households. Around 32 per cent of the Hindu children among non-migrant households are estimated as undernourished which is almost two times higher than that of the migrant households. The gap has further inflated to three times in terms of severe malnutrition.

The other two measures of nutritional status however, exhibit same sorts of variation among the migrant and non-migrant households. Thus it is very clear

Table 11: Neonatal, Post-Neonatal, Infant and Childhood Mortality for the Ten-Year Period Preceding the Survey by Sex of the Child, Religion and Previous Birth Interval, according to Migration Status of the Household

Category	Neonatal Mortality	Post-Neonatal Mortality	Infant Mortality	Child Mortality	Under-Five Mortality
<i>Migrant HH</i>					
Sex					
Male	28.7	12.0	40.7	6.7	47.1
Female	13.2	10.3	23.6	5.6	29.0
Religion					
Hindu	15.7	—	15.7	8.0	23.6
Muslim	26.2	16.1	42.3	6.7	48.8
Other	10.6	11.0	21.5	—	21.5
Previous birth interval					
< 24 months	22.4	16.7	39.1	13.1	51.7
24-47 months	14.0	8.4	22.4	2.9	25.2
47 + months	35.2	16.1	51.3	5.8	56.8
Total	21.1	11.2	32.3	6.1	38.2
<i>Non-migrant HH</i>					
Sex					
Male	21.3	9.9	31.2	11.2	42.0
Female	23.8	5.9	29.7	10.7	40.1
Religion					
Hindu	21.3	3.4	24.6	9.9	34.3
Muslim	31.3	14.2	45.5	13.9	58.8
Other	15.5	14.2	29.7	10.5	39.9
Previous birth interval					
< 24 months	31.2	17.7	49.0	17.5	65.6
24-47 months	25.3	8.5	33.8	16.4	49.7
47 + months	9.6	4.8	14.4	2.5	16.9
Total	22.5	8.0	30.5	10.9	41.0

Note: Less than 0.5.

that barring few exceptions, the nutritional status of the children among migrant households are comparatively better than their non-migrant counterparts. The reflection of this better nutritional status would further be judged in terms of child mortality. In this respect, Table 11 displays the extent of child mortality among migrant and non-migrant households by socio-demographic characteristics of mother and children. It is interesting to note that the variations among migrant and non-migrant households in terms of the incidence of neonatal as well as post-neonatal mortality which is caused mostly due to the adverse biological reasons and poor antenatal care are not at all conclusive. Although the rate of neonatal mortality is marginally lower in the migrant households than their non-migrant counterparts the same is not true in case of post-neonatal mortality. Concerning child mortality that is caused substantially due to the low socio-economic conditions, migrant households have a clear edge over non-migrant households. The same line of difference has already been recorded in terms of nutritional status. Thus the improved socio-economic background of migrant households bears direct impact on the health of the children.

Analysis by religion again reveals high mortality among the Muslim children. However, except post-neonatal, the rates of mortality for Muslim children are slightly lower in case of migrant households than their non-migrant counterparts. On the other extreme, in case of Hindus and Christians the different rates of child deaths are substantially lower among the migrant households.

The mortality scenario has further been examined in terms of child spacing which leads an important role to influence the survival chances of children. In general, it exhibits a negative association between child spacing and survival chances of children as has been observed in non-migrant households. However, it is really stunning to note a 'U shaped' association in case of migrant households. Among the migrant households, neonatal, post-neonatal and infant mortality jump suddenly in case of long-term spacing (47 months and above). It requires further analysis in order to evaluate this peculiarity. Thus although the migrant households are having low child mortality in comparison to non-migrant counterparts, the risk of early deaths are still very high among the migrant households. It may be because of inappropriate antenatal and postnatal cares.

This fact encourages authors to examine the health practices among the mothers and children.

Utilisation of Maternal Health Care

Antenatal care (ANC) for each pregnancy has always been regarded as the most important ingredients for safe motherhood. As has been noted by Harrison

(1990), the Safe Motherhood initiative proclaims that all pregnant women must receive basic but professional antenatal care. In case of Kerala an overwhelming majority (98 per cent) of the current births have been registered to secure antenatal care and mostly (96 per cent) from a doctor [PRC and IIPS 1995]. With this widespread appreciation of scientific antenatal care due to the better public health system

Table 12: Percentage of Live Births during Four-Years Preceding the Survey Receiving Antenatal Care (ANC) during Pregnancy by Source, according to Background Characteristics and Migration Status of the Household

Characteristic	Antenatal care provider in the							
	Migrant HH				Non-migrant HH			
	Doctor	Other	None	Number of Births	Doctor	Other	None	Number of Births
Age at birth								
< 20	94.9	3.0	2.0	99	94.2	3.8	1.9	104
20-34	97.1	0.8	2.0	450	96.4	1.4	1.4	886
34 +	(88.0)	(4.0)	(4.0)	25	(81.8)	(3.0)	(12.1)	33
Residence								
Urban	99.3	0.7	—	136	97.8	1.5	0.7	279
Rural	95.4	1.6	2.7	438	94.9	1.7	2.2	744
Education								
Illiterate	(87.0)	(6.5)	(4.3)	46	82.7	5.5	10.2	127
Lit, primary	93.3	1.5	5.2	194	96.7	0.6	1.2	334
Mid complete	98.8	1.2	—	166	96.9	2.1	0.3	322
High school +	100.0	—	—	168	99.6	0.4	—	240
Religion of HH head								
Hindu	100.0	—	—	135	96.3	1.7	0.8	601
Muslim	94.3	2.0	3.4	352	93.6	0.9	5.0	219
Other	98.9	1.1	—	87	95.1	2.5	1.0	205
Total	96.3	1.4	2.1	574	95.7	1.7	1.8	1023

Notes: Percentage may not add to 100.0, because ANC received only at home are not shown separately.
 -- : Less than 0.05 per cent.
 () : Based on 25-49 cases.

Table 13: Percent Distribution of Live Births during the Four-Years Preceding the Survey by Place of Delivery, according to Background Characteristics and Migration Status of the Household

Characteristic	Place of Delivery					Number of Births
	Public Health Facility	Private Health Facility	Parents' Home	Other	Missing	
Migrant HH						
Residence						
Urban	26.5	69.9	1.5	1.5	0.7	136
Rural	23.5	58.4	2.7	14.4	0.9	438
Education						
Illiterate	(21.7)	(28.3)	(6.5)	(41.3)	(2.2)	46
Lit, primary	25.8	49.0	3.6	20.1	1.5	194
Mid Complete	27.1	66.3	2.4	4.2	—	166
High +	20.2	79.2	—	—	0.6	168
Religion of HH head						
Hindu	32.6	66.7	—	—	0.7	135
Muslim	20.2	56.8	4.0	18.2	0.9	352
Other	27.6	70.1	—	1.1	1.1	87
Total	24.2	61.1	2.4	11.3	0.9	574
Non-migrant HH						
Residence						
Urban	49.1	44.8	—	5.4	0.7	279
Rural	45.6	41.8	2.6	9.5	0.5	744
Education						
Illiterate	43.3	19.7	5.5	29.1	2.4	127
Lit, primary	53.9	31.1	2.7	12.0	0.3	334
Mid Complete	48.4	47.5	0.9	2.8	0.3	322
High school +	35.4	64.2	—	—	0.4	240
Religion of HH head						
Hindu	51.4	41.9	1.3	4.5	0.8	601
Muslim	38.8	37.0	4.1	20.1	—	219
Other	40.0	50.8	1.0	7.9	0.3	205
Total	46.5	42.6	1.9	8.4	0.6	1023

Note: -- : Less than 0.05 per cent.
 () : Based on 25-49 cases.

Conclusions

it is not expected to have ample variations among migrant and non-migrant households in terms of receiving antenatal care. According to Table 12, migrant households are having marginal edge (96.3 per cent) over non-migrant counterparts (95.7 per cent) in respect of receiving antenatal care from a doctor. Further cross analysis of the incidence by controlling other socio-demographic variables, however, extended a similar line of variation among the migrant and non-migrant households. In this respect, education and religion of mother are playing an important role. In case of migrant households around 5 per cent of the mothers literate up to primary level have been reported not to receive any antenatal care as against only 1 per cent in case of non-migrant households. Analysis by religion again offered low acceptance rate for Muslims irrespective of their migration characteristics.

Along with the antenatal care another factor which leads a vital role to control the infant mortality is the place of delivery. From the standpoint of child survival and the health of the mother, it is always advantageous for the birth of a new-born to take place under proper hygienic conditions with the assistance of a trained medical practitioner [World Health Organisation 1994]. Table 13 represents the per cent distribution of all live births during the four years preceding the survey in migrant and non-migrant households by place of delivery according to selected background characteristics of the mother. In this regard, a wide variation can be observed in terms of the utilisation of health facilities. For instance, in case of migrant households 61 per cent of the total deliveries have been reported to occur either in a private nursing home or private hospital as against 43 per cent among non-migrant households. The rate, however, varies in its degree according to the education of mother, religion and place of residence. In case of the educated mother, around 80 per cent of the deliveries in the migrant households occur under the private health facility as against 64 per cent of non-migrant households. It is also surprising that even in the rural area the utilisation of private services are very high (58 per cent) among the migrant households. Thus it is very clear that the improved economic status among migrant households also leads to considerable changes in the pattern of utilisation of health services and consequently generated lot of demand for private health institutions.

It is thus clear from the above discussions that a good number of Keralites have been migrated towards some capital rich pockets of the Gulf region in quest of their fortune. These emigrants are mainly semi-skilled/unskilled young men with a low level of education and occupation who have moved temporarily, leaving behind their nearest kin in order to accumulate wealth for their native households. In this regard, we can summarise the ultimate impact of the migratory movement on the living standard of the migrant households.

(i) The living condition of migrant households has changed substantially through the inflow of foreign remittances. A good share of these households perceived improvement in terms of the economic status of their households. The extent of improvement, however, largely varies according to emigrant's duration of stay abroad. The longer the duration of stay abroad the better is the economic status of native household.

(ii) Although migrant households have achieved better economic standards, its manifestation in the process of family formation is not readily recognised. In this respect, religion and education of mother plays a crucial role to motivate the actual fertility. In the context of low level of fertility that already exists in the state, not much of differentials in the fertility behaviour could be observed between migrant and non-migrant households. However, the indications suggest that migration might lead to further decline in the level of fertility.

(iii) Better living standard among migrant households has resulted in improvement in the nutritional status of the children and consequently lowering the level of child mortality.

(iv) The improved economic status among migrant households led to considerable changes in the pattern of utilisation of health services. ■■■

Notes

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- 1 The four districts of Palghat, Malappuram, Kozhikode and Cannanore constitute the former Malabar region [Joseph, 1988].
- 2 Other religion in case of Kerala is mostly dominated by Christians [PRC and IIPS 1995].
- 3 A same line of understatements have also been

observed by Mathew and Nair (1978) from their field experience.

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