



## LONELINESS AMONG INTERSTATE MIGRANTS IN KERALA

Pramod S. K. and Sunil Kumar P.

Ph D

### ABSTRACT :

*Loneliness among interstate migrants in Kerala is assessed in the present study. Among them 6% experienced a significant high level of loneliness and 37% experienced medium level of loneliness. The feeling of isolation impacts almost all areas of functioning. There exists no significant correlation between loneliness and age among the migrant population. There exists a significant difference among the migrant labourers in their loneliness on the basis of marital status. Widowers and married people are experiencing high level of loneliness compared to people who are not married. There exists significant difference among the migrant labourers in their loneliness on the basis of type of family. Migrant labourers from nuclear families are having high level of loneliness when compared to those from joint and extended families. There exist no significant relationship between loneliness and the number of family members working in Kerala. The presence or absence of subgroups of relatives in the group is not making any significant change in the level of loneliness among the migrant labourers. Whether the migrant labourer is the breadwinner of the family or not, is not making a significant difference in the level of loneliness. There exists significant difference among the migrant labourers in their loneliness on the basis of whether the workers from the same state live together or not. Workers from the same state living together do have significantly lower level of loneliness when compared to workers who live in a heterogeneous group. Educational qualification is not having a significant impact on the level of loneliness among the migrant labourers. As migrant labourers play an important role in the booming construction sector of Kerala, they should be given due respect and appropriate welfare measures should be planned and implemented to have healthy physical, psychological and social well-being.*

**KEYWORDS :** Loneliness , Educational qualification , healthy physical, psychological.

### INTRODUCTION

Globalization has led to a significant increase in human mobility within and across the countries (IOM, 2013). Migration is a process of social change that involves the movement of persons from one location to another either within the same nation (internal) or between different nations (International). It includes a relatively permanent change of residence from one city or rural area to another; a move from one neighbourhood to another within the same city (residential mobility); temporary moves for purposes such as



seasonal employment or to attend school (circulation); and voluntary or involuntary movements across national boundaries (immigration, international labour migration, refugee movements). Migration has been a historical process shaping human history, economy and culture. It re-emerged as a strong force shaping cities and urbanization since the time of industrial revolution in western countries, and is closely associated with urban transition influencing the demand and supply of

labour, economic growth and human wellbeing (McKeown 2004; Skeldon 2008). Once a person decided to migrate, thoughts like, “where to go, what to do, shall I be welcomed, when do I back, how can I leave my close ones and so on” arises in mindset and after a series of mental stress and strain, the person migrates with all the probable pain and pleasure. When encountering a new place the migrant experiences a sense of loss, dislocation, alienation and isolation, which will lead to the process of acculturation (Dinesh Bhugra, 2004).

Being a complex phenomenon, migration not only influences the size, composition and distribution of the population but more importantly impacts the social, cultural, political and economic life of the people and outcomes can be vastly different for men and women, for different groups and different locations (de Haan and Rogaly, 2002). So thus migration, be it internal or international can solve issues related to work force deficiency or of problems related to population decline and ageing.

According to Deshingkar and Anderson (2004), in countries like India migration is adopted as a routine livelihood strategy and not simply as a mere response to the shocks. India tops the world in the number of migrants sent abroad and more than half of the 16.59 million live in the Gulf region are Indians as per the UN report 2017 (IANS, 2017). Poverty and prosperity both are responsible for inducing migration. Internal migration in India is many times larger than international migration (Ram Bhagat, 2017). Migration in India is primarily of two types: (a) Long-term migration, resulting in the relocation of an individual or household and (b) short term or seasonal and circular migration, which is a peculiar feature of Indian labour migration which involves back and forth movement between the source and destination.

The state of Kerala - ‘God’s Own Country’ - holds a unique place when it comes to matters related to migration as Malayalees are known for their mobility nature not only within the country, but also across the borders. But the situations were much different about a century ago, when most of the Malayalees lead a contented life within state boundaries (Joseph, 2001). But with the independence and due to the oil boom in the 1970s, Keralites started venturing out of the state boundaries in large numbers in search of better opportunities and livelihood options. The continuous emigration of labour culminated in the scarcity of labour, which was followed inevitably by increase in the wage rate. These developments received the attention of workers from other states and they started flocking Kerala in large numbers. This has opened a new era of replacement migration to Kerala as the state once again becoming a fertile ground for migrating population after a break of about 60 years since the 1960s. Though initially the migrants were primarily from the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu and that mostly characterised seasonal and short-duration migration, at a later period the state started getting migrants from far distant states like Bihar, Assam and Bengal.

Kerala, is now witnessing large inflow of migrant labour from different parts of the country in the recent years and is likely to have 3.5 to 4 million inter-state migrant workers in 2017 (Benoy Peter & Vishnu Narendran, 2017). Though initially the migrants were largely from the neighbouring states and mostly seasonal and short-duration migration, at a later period the state started getting migrants from far distant states. Higher wages for unskilled labour in the state, large opportunities for employment, the reluctance on the part of Kerala workers to do menial and hard physical work, and shortage of local labour led to the massive influx of migrant labour to the state.

In the Kerala context, apart from the studies conducted by Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation (GIFT) only a few studies are done in understanding the psychological status and issues of migrant workers. In every year, it is estimated that 2.35 lakh workers come to Kerala — around 630 a day — registering an annual growth of 10 percent. The migrant workers not only live in poor conditions but are also feeling insecure as Kerala has seen many clashes between them and the local people (Narayana, 2013). The money flowing from abroad and the good climatic condition prevailing in Kerala act as catalysts and as the pulling factors of migration. The elevated wages here compared to many other parts of India is the major reason for this phenomenon. The migrant labour force is helping Kerala in many ways, mainly in supporting the emerging construction sector. They have penetrated almost all sectors such as agriculture, industry, business, marketing, etc... and spread all over Kerala. But they are facing many problems as a good majority of them are unskilled workers. Most of these inter-state migrants have poor language skills that prevent

them from understanding the services available to them and also prevent them to voice their needs and problems.

The less availability of skilled and technical native workers in Kerala's construction industry compel many north Indian people to migrate to Kerala. But the migrants working here are exposed to adverse work conditions, hard physical labour, poor living conditions, and increased-hours of work and lack of basic amenities. They are also separated from their families and have less job security. They are mostly from remote villages, often are less educated and not cautious about different preventive measures. The high minimum wages with comparatively better living conditions in Kerala, even in the villages, are often the motivating factors for migrant workers from other states as the wages are often double or even three times of the wages obtained in other major cities in India. However, Kerala-workers are paid even higher amounts and so, most of the times the local residents prefer the migrant workers because of the comparatively cheaper labour. It is interesting to note that even though the wages for labour are high, the cost of living in the state is also high.

Kerala is having high literacy rates and better education facilities. High linguistic, social and cultural differences with their states, makes the unskilled migrant labourers to feel Kerala as an alien society. Standard of living and purchasing power of migrant workers are less compared to the Keralites. Cultural differences - dress, rituals, habits, - increases the feeling of alienation. Attitude of native people, especially at work place, is another factor. Living cost of Kerala is also high when compared to the migrants' native state. Even though there are many studies dealing with social, economical and financial aspects of migrant labourers, no detailed study was yet conducted on the psychological problems of the migrants in Kerala.

In this context, as a part of the psychological problems the sense of loneliness faced by migrant laborers in the construction sector is studied to advocate policy measures. It will help to suggest ways to tackle the problems with a labour-friendly point of view and also give migrants more empathetic consideration which is very important as far the integrity of the nation is concerned.

The researchers' informal interaction with a few migrant workers had thrown light on the personal problems the migrants faced during their stay in Kerala. A few of such problems are: unfriendliness from the local community; loneliness, especially due to separation from kith and kin in the native place; a sense of estrangement; fear about work related accidents; uncertainty arising out of the fear of loss of job; emotional deprivation (loss of affection and care of family members); the stresses and strains, anxiety and depression. Another significant problem the migrant labourers highlighted while interacting with them was that the native people and the police set eyes on them with suspicion. Lack of coping with regional language makes them difficult to express even their innocence. The language barrier further leads to stress and strain as they could not communicate properly with health providers, merchants, bankers and policemen. Even though they appear happy outside, they are experiencing many psychological problems that remain suppressed as they are compelled to stay here for survival. Thus this study is focusing on the extent of loneliness that the migrant labourers experience while they are engaged in work; or when they deal with the people around them in their locality.

### 1. Pilot study

The pilot study conducted in the first week of January 2016 among 10 migrant labourers in Thiruvananthapuram helped to understand the field reality, heterogeneity of the population and a clear idea regarding the nature of psychological issues and its strength among the migrant labourers. It also helped to draw ideas in the preparation of the interview schedule through the interaction with the migrants. A better understanding of the behaviour dynamics of the migrant labourers was obtained. The pilot study also revealed the barriers to be tackled in the course of the study especially the language barrier and the busy time schedule of the labourers. This also gave idea about the strategy to get respondents for the study. The researchers approached supervisors or contractors and got permission for data collection which is necessary as they will help to get the respondents during their free time. On the basis of the pilot study detailed methodology was worked out.

## 2. Research design

The study follows mixed research design (sequential explanatory) in which the quantitative part is cross-sectional and the qualitative part is case study.

## 3. Universe and Unit of the study

The universe of the study includes the male migrant labourers from northern India working in Kerala. However the study is limited to Thiruvananthapuram and Ernakulam districts. The unit is a single migrant male-labourer from northern India.

## 4. Sampling

The study follows cluster sampling as the migrant labours are staying in groups, and are concentrated in specific geographical areas or pockets. Four important clusters were identified from both the districts based on the concentration of migrant labourers. Sreekariyam, Kazhakkottam, Pothencode, and Karakulam are the clusters included from Thiruvananthapuram District. In Ernakulam district, Perumbavoor, Aluva, Kalady, and Edapally are the clusters selected for the study.

**Table**  
**Custer wise break up of respondents**

| District                          | Cluster      | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------|---------|
| Thiruvananthapuram<br>(50% n=100) | Sreekariyam  | 25        | 12.5    |
|                                   | Kazhakkottam | 25        | 12.5    |
|                                   | Pothencode   | 25        | 12.5    |
|                                   | Karakulam    | 25        | 12.5    |
| Ernakulam<br>(50% n=100)          | Perumbavoor  | 25        | 12.5    |
|                                   | Aluva        | 25        | 12.5    |
|                                   | Kalady       | 25        | 12.5    |
|                                   | Edapally     | 25        | 12.5    |
|                                   | Total        | 200       | 100.0   |

A sample of 100 respondents was selected from each district. Thus the sample size is 200. The sample is divided equally among these clusters. i.e., 25 respondents were included from each cluster.

Apart from this, for detailed understanding of the nature and extent of loneliness among migrants, seven cases were identified and detailed analysis was done.

## 5. Sources and methods of data collection

The following are the tools used for data collection:

1. A structured interview schedule that consisted of 'Loneliness scale'. UCLA Loneliness Scale by Daniel Russell was used for assessing the level of loneliness among the migrant labourers. The scale consists of 10 items with choices in the five point Likert format. The minimum score is 10 and the maximum score is 50. The test is having a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.94 which indicates high reliability.
2. An observation guide to understand the migrants' routine activities, level of hygiene and health status.
3. In addition to this, discussion with the director of an NGO working in the field of migrant labourers was also done to get background information including the challenges faced by migrant labourers working in Kerala.

The tools were translated to Hindi to help the investigators for data collection.

## 6. Statistical techniques

The statistical technique was chosen after checking the normality of the data using *Shapiro Wilkstest*. Based on this both Parametric and non- parametric tests were used appropriately. The major statistical techniques used are independent sample t- test, One-way ANOVA, Duncan test, Mann Whitney U test, Kruskal Wallis test, and Spearman's rank correlation. The reliability of the scales was checked using Cronbach's alpha.

## 7. Data analysis and interpretation

The collected data were verified, and coded appropriately and entered in to SPSS. V22, for statistical analysis. Analysis employs both descriptive as well as inferential statistics. The significance of the associations of variables was tested using statistical tools mentioned earlier. In the analysis part graphical representation of important variables were also incorporated for clarity.

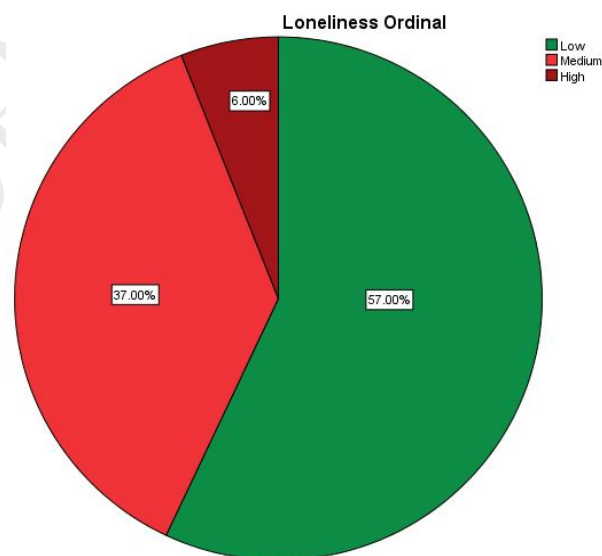
## 8. Results and discussion

Psychologists view loneliness as a sense of estrangement caused by the perceived feeling of separation from the external world. Alienation usually results in a sense of loneliness that in turn results in a lack of involvement in basic decision making, lack of human contact, little hope for betterment, and a feeling of powerlessness. Separation from one's own native place to an alien land creates a sense of estrangement and psychological struggle among the migrant labourers.

Loneliness is a universal human emotion, yet it is both complex and unique to each individual. Loneliness, according to many experts, is not necessarily about being alone. Instead, it is the *perception* of being alone and isolated that matters most. It is the distress that results from discrepancies between ideal and perceived social relationships and is the distressing feeling that occurs when one's social relationships are perceived as being less satisfying than what is desired.

Loneliness causes people to feel empty, alone and unwanted. People who are lonely often crave human contact, but their state of mind makes it more difficult to form connections with other people. When migrant workers have to work in a mechanical world their emotional needs are not often met and there is a greater chance for them to end up with loneliness.

Figure 1  
Loneliness



Among the migrant labourers 6% (n=114) are experiencing a very significant high level of loneliness and 37% (n=74) of the migrants are experiencing medium level of loneliness( figure 1). The feeling of isolation impacts almost all areas of functioning. Usually loneliness is associated with feeling of alienation and depression. Unhappiness, having no one to talk to, lack of affection, care, and a sense of being isolated by native people leads to a feeling of loneliness.

According to Ali, a 23 year old uneducated young man, is from a rural area of West Bengal: *“Most of the time, I am treated as a secondary citizen by the Malayalees. They rarely find time to interact with me and often excludes me and treat me with suspicion and hatred. I feel unhappy that I lack somebody to openly talk with.”*

Lack of opportunity to openly interact with often leads to a sense of isolation and Loneliness.

Loneliness is influenced by perceived social isolation.

Table 1 clearly indicates thatthere exist no significant correlation between loneliness and age among the migrant population.

**Table 1**  
**Loneliness Vs Age**

| Correlations   |            |                         | Age   | Loneliness |
|----------------|------------|-------------------------|-------|------------|
| Spearman's rho | Age        | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .121       |
|                |            | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .     | .088       |
|                |            | N                       | 200   | 200        |
|                | Loneliness | Correlation Coefficient | .121  | 1.000      |
|                |            | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .088  | .          |
|                |            | N                       | 200   | 200        |

Loneliness can occur at any age. It depends upon a multitude of personal, social and environmental factors. Almost all the migrant labourers working in Kerala especially in the construction sector is having similar experiences related to work and life in Kerala. Most of the times they engage in work in a mechanical manner no matter what age they all have to strive hard for their daily bread.

Based on marital status, migrant labours significantly varies in their level of loneliness (table 2).

**Table 2**  
**Loneliness Vs Marital Status**

|            | Marital Status | N   | Mean Rank | df | Kruskal Wallis Test Chi-Square |
|------------|----------------|-----|-----------|----|--------------------------------|
| Loneliness | Single         | 93  | 89.97     | 2  | 5.979*                         |
|            | Married        | 106 | 109.50    |    |                                |
|            | Widower        | 1   | 125.50    |    |                                |
|            | Total          | 200 |           |    |                                |

Note \* the difference in mean rank is significant at 0.05 level ( $p = .05$ )

There exists a significant difference among the migrant labourers in their loneliness on the basis of marital status at 0.05 levels (Kruskal Wallis Test). Widowers and married people are experiencing high level of loneliness compared to people who are not married. Being a part of the family and having mutual responsibilities people who are married will experience loneliness when separated from their beloved ones. Family responsibility pushes the migrant labourer to migrate and hence when they are in an alien world they find it difficult to tolerate the pain of separation.

Harshan (Name changed) 42 year old married man says: *"I am the sole bread winner of my family. I have no body to express my affection and concerns, monotonous work schedules and the conflict with the ideal that 'to spent time and life together with close ones is the essence of life' creates a sense of emotional numbness and emptiness feeling in me. My expectations and views about life seems contradictory to the existing reality and hence often I experience loneliness; I am fed up and wants to go back to my village. When I feel lonely I use 'panmasala'."* This case clearly indicates the struggle faced by married individuals to survive in a migrated land in the midst of loneliness.

Family is one of the important factor that determines the psychological nature an individual. Table 3 indicates that exists significant difference among them migrant labourers in their loneliness on the basis of type of family.

**Table 3**  
**Loneliness Vs Nature of family**

|            | Nature of family | N   | Mean Rank | df | Kruskal Wallis Test<br>Chi-Square |
|------------|------------------|-----|-----------|----|-----------------------------------|
| Loneliness | Nuclear          | 131 | 107.11    | 2  | 7.420*                            |
|            | Joint            | 67  | 89.77     |    |                                   |
|            | Extended         | 2   | 27.00     |    |                                   |
|            | Total            | 200 |           |    |                                   |

Note \* the difference in mean rank is significant at 0.05 level (p = .024)

Kruskal Wallis test reveals that migrant labourers from nuclear families are having high level of loneliness when compared to those from joint and extended families. People from extended families are having the least level of loneliness when compared to other groups. People from nuclear families are closely knitted among themselves and when they get separated usually feel greater level loneliness as a result of loss of affection and intimacy due to isolation. Personality factors can also contribute to the experience of loneliness. People from nuclear families are having constrained personality types when compared to people from joint and extended families.

According to Vignesh a migrant worker from Assam: *"I am here for doing work and earning money to look after my family. Since my wife is pregnant and my father is ill I am worried about their conditions. Here I find difficulty in reaching out people or to communicate with people around. This makes me feel lonely. I am unable to share my concerns and don't have anybody to spent time with me."*

The need to fulfil the responsibilities of a nuclear family is of at most importance for many migrant workers that often makes them stressful and the attachment they have with their family members in the native land makes them feel isolated in a migrated land.

**Table 4**  
**Loneliness Vs. No. of Family Members working in Kerala**

| Correlations   |                                    |                         |            |                                    |
|----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|------------------------------------|
|                |                                    |                         | Loneliness | No. of family members working here |
| Spearman's rho | Loneliness                         | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000      | .124                               |
|                |                                    | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .          | .081                               |
|                |                                    | N                       | 200        | 200                                |
|                | No. of family members working here | Correlation Coefficient | .124       | 1.000                              |
|                |                                    | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .081       | .                                  |
|                |                                    | N                       | 200        | 200                                |

As per table 4 there exist no significant relationship between loneliness and the number of family members working in Kerala. No matter whether relatives or family members working in Kerala, Migrants have their own work hardships and face similar experience related to work.

**Table 5**  
**Loneliness Vs. Presence of Relatives**

|            | Presence of Relatives | N   | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks | Mann-Whitney U |
|------------|-----------------------|-----|-----------|--------------|----------------|
| Loneliness | Yes                   | 88  | 105.81    | 9311.50      | 4460.500#      |
|            | No                    | 112 | 96.33     | 10788.50     |                |
|            | Total                 | 200 |           |              |                |

Note: #the difference in mean rank is not significant at 0.05 level ( $p = .244$ )

The presence or absence of subgroups of relatives in the group is not making any significant change in the level of loneliness among the migrant labourers (table 5). In a perceived alien world the migrants have to work hard to achieve their expected goals. So most of the time they are in the work place and engaged in strenuous works, and when they finish it they spent their time in taking rest. They have lesser time to communicate and convey their concerns and regards. And hence they all are having similar patterns of experiences including loneliness.

**Table 6**  
**Loneliness VS. Earning Status**  
**(Sole bread winner of family)**

|            | Whether Bread Winner of family | N   | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks | Mann-Whitney U |
|------------|--------------------------------|-----|-----------|--------------|----------------|
| Loneliness | Yes                            | 103 | 100.98    | 10400.50     | 4946.500#      |
|            | No                             | 97  | 99.99     | 9699.50      |                |
|            | Total                          | 200 |           |              |                |

Note: # the difference in mean rank is not significant at 0.05 level ( $p = .903$ )

Whether the migrant labourer is the breadwinner of the family or not, is not making a significant difference in the level of loneliness among the labourers (table 6). Loneliness among the migrant labourers usually results from a feeling of isolation, alienation, personality and situational factors.

**Table 7**  
**Loneliness VS. Homogeneity of group**  
**(Workers from same state live together)**

|            | Homogeneity of group | N   | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks | Mann-Whitney U |
|------------|----------------------|-----|-----------|--------------|----------------|
| Loneliness | Yes                  | 137 | 86.51     | 11852.00     | 2399.000**     |
|            | No                   | 63  | 130.92    | 8248.00      |                |
|            | Total                | 200 |           |              |                |

Note: \*\* The difference in mean rank is significant at 0.01 level ( $p < .01$ )

There exists significant difference among the migrant labours in their loneliness on the basis of whether the workers from the same state live together or not (table 7). Under conditions were workers from



the same state live together, loneliness was found to be significantly low when compared to conditions where workers live in the absence of the workers from the same state.

Mr.Hamsa, 26 years old, from west Bengal: *"I regularly visit mosque to get rid of my loneliness or else I will listen to music when I feel sad."*

**Table 8**  
**Loneliness VS. Educational qualifications**

|            | Educational qualification | N   | Mean Rank | df | Kruskal Wallis Test Chi-Square |
|------------|---------------------------|-----|-----------|----|--------------------------------|
| Loneliness | No schooling              | 58  | 82.87     | 7  | 10.782#                        |
|            | Below 10th                | 102 | 105.88    |    |                                |
|            | 10th failed               | 28  | 106.57    |    |                                |
|            | 10th                      | 6   | 132.75    |    |                                |
|            | Plus two failed           | 1   | 173.50    |    |                                |
|            | Plus two                  | 3   | 96.17     |    |                                |
|            | Degree failed             | 1   | 138.50    |    |                                |
|            | Any Other                 | 1   | 113.00    |    |                                |
|            | No schooling              | 58  | 82.87     |    |                                |
|            | Below 10th                | 102 | 105.88    |    |                                |
|            | 10th failed               | 28  | 106.57    |    |                                |
|            | 10th                      | 6   | 132.75    |    |                                |
|            | Total                     | 200 |           |    |                                |

Note: # the difference in mean ranks is not significant at 0.05level (p=.148)

Educational qualification is not having a significant impact on the level of loneliness among the migrant labourers.

Uneducated migrants find difficulty in dealing with Malayalam language. Perhaps the reason being these northern and eastern migrants speak the languages belong to Indo – Aryan language family (Hindi speaking) while Malayalam is Dravidian language.

Migrants and refugees are among the most vulnerable groups in relation to experiencing loneliness. When they arrive in reception country, they face a completely different life in a strange new environment. This situation, in combination with government policies, can make migrants and refugees' journey traumatic and damaging for their well-being. Restrictions to entitlements to welfare services and exclusions in employment and housing, along with the possibility of detention and removal, are social disconnection factors that are associated with loneliness and can further impact on health and wellbeing. Because of these restrictions, migrants and refugees feel discriminated, excluded, unloved and lonelier. Loneliness and social isolation have negative effects on health, particularly increased mortality and impaired quality of life. Promoting mental well-being and preventing mental health and other problems associated with loneliness is likely to significantly reduce the economic burden and related issues as far as nation is concerned (Panos Christodoulou, 2014). The influx of the migrant labourers is increasing day by day in Kerala. It's time to be more vigilant and ensure the implementation of the existing legislation as well as policies and schemes. Even the registration of migrant labourers are not fully implemented. As a host, State Kerala is obliged to ensure and provide healthy and hygienic atmosphere to work as well as to live, for the migrant workers.

## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are derived on the light of the observation, field experience, analyses of the data, inferences, and findings that can directly or indirectly reduce the level of loneliness

experienced by the migrant workers. From the field experience of the researchers it is found that most of the migrant labourers do not have membership in welfare fund and labour identity card. There is no clear statistics about the number of migrant labourers in Kerala and their whereabouts. Because of this it is very difficult to conduct a study among them and also it becomes difficult to intervene into their problems. Therefore all the migrant labourers should be registered and be enrolled in the welfare scheme for issuing them the labour identity card. An authorized labour identity card will give them a sense of security and identity so that they do not feel isolated. Majority of the migrants are travelling by train. Therefore facility for registration should be provided at the railway station. A warm and cordial welcome at the railway stations will motivate the migrants to get accustomed to the new work place.

College students, especially social science students can play an important role in conducting these awareness programs as part of their community work in the form of camps, classes, and street play to provide awareness of the facilities provided by the government of Kerala for their welfare.

Mental health care provision should be established for the psychological wellbeing of the migrant labourers. Since physical and mental health is related migrant labourers should be given proper health services through the public health centres of Kerala. Along with the physical health services, there should be provisions in the public health centers for addressing their mental health issues. For this psychotherapy and counselling centres or clinics should be attached to the PHCs with personnel proficient in Hindi. The mental health care centre should be available with the constant support of psychiatrists, psychologists, and counsellors who are qualified enough to handle multicultural issues especially the mental health problems of the migrant labourers. Psychological assessment and remedial measures should be provided with low cost. Field visits, awareness campaigns, and mental health care camps if conducted by this group of mental health professionals will surely help to improve psychological wellbeing of the migrant labourers. Facility for providing psychiatric medicines will supplement the functioning of the centre. Referral services should be readily provided to these migrant labourers so that the existing infrastructure for rehabilitation can be used optimally.

Sinzeloneliness is considered to be caused by the negative attitude of Malayalee society, Malayalee co-workers, and government officials. So awareness programme should be conducted for these stakeholders to get rid of the attitude of isolating the migrants.

From the case studies, it is revealed that police sometimes act cruelly towards the migrant. So, proper instruction and training should be given to the police force, to give due consideration for the migrants, as they are in an unfamiliar place.

The labour commissionerate should also give due attention to labour problems of migrant workers. An active body under the direct control of the labour department should take more steps in monitoring and clearing these issues.

The government should take policy decisions for providing recreational facilities for the migrants and should strengthen the existing facilities (parks, tourist spots etc.) and should make it available at a cheaper cost. Public health care facilities and public transport systems should be modified and strengthened so as to accommodate the huge number of migrants (more than 35 lakhs now). This is necessary as migrants are occupying the public transport system as well as other common facilities enjoyed by Malayalees. This is essential to avoid frustration among Malayalee people. Opportunities for public interaction between migrant workers and Malayalee society will help to develop a mutual understanding about the culture, lifestyle, and related issues faced by the two. For this intercultural celebrations should be organized in Kerala where they get the opportunity to celebrate their festivals like Holi, and festivals of Kerala like Onam together with Malayalees. Food festivals can be conducted incorporating different traditional food contents from both Kerala and from the migrants' native state.

Many migrants are unaware of child rights and thus many of their children often become victims of exploitation by the unscrupulous and cunning work providers. The child rights should be considered and adequate measures should be taken to protect the children from becoming victims of child labour. Migrant children working here should be given humanitarian consideration and rehabilitation. Education and

vocational training should be provided for their personal development. Once they reach adulthood, they should be given freedom to choose the job of their interest.

Adequate care and measures should be taken at the social and legal level to treat the migrants properly with justice. The labour department and Police should also take proactive roles in dealing with human right issues of migrants. If labour issues are not handled properly on time, it may cause law and order situations which cannot be handled by the existing police force of Kerala.

Newly arrived migrant labourers usually face problems due to language barrier. Therefore at, railway stations, police stations, bus terminals, there should be help desks to guide them properly. Health department should strengthen the existing measures to check and ensure the hygiene and safety at the places of stay of migrant labourers. Labour department should check the safety measures provided to migrant labourers at other work sites.

## CONCLUSION

Among the psychological problems loneliness is affecting many migrant labourers. They are finding their own way-out to cope with their loneliness. They resort to religious practices and sharing with people from their own state and using substances such as pan masala, alcohol, cigarette, and hearing music and telephoning relatives as their coping mechanism. As migrant labourers play an important role in the booming construction sector of Kerala, they should be given due consideration and appropriate welfare measures should be planned and implemented.

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**Pramod S. K.**  
Ph D



**Sunil Kumar P.**  
Ph D