

## A Study on Mental Health of Migrant Labourers with Reference to Thodupuzha Taluk, Kerala

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### ABSTRACT

Health is forever measured as wealth. "Health is a situation of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not only the absence of disease or ill-health: it is a fundamental human right and the attainment of the highest possible level of health is a worldwide social goal whose realization requires the action of many other socio-economic and political sectors in addition to the health area." All dimensions of socio- economic, political and cultural conditions such as food, water supply, education, housing, employment, reasonable wage and circumstances of creativity etc. play a vital role in maintaining health. This paper highlights the migrants physically, socially and mentally for surplus production with cheap labour. **Research Methodology:** The study is descriptive in nature 60 respondents migrated to Thodupuzha taluk were included in the study consisting includes both male and female. The sampling method adopted was purposive sampling. Tools used: Interview Schedule to find out socio- demographic profile and Mental Health Inventory Developed by Jagdish and A.K Srivastava. **Results:** Majority (31.7%) of the respondents below 25 years of age, high majority were male respondents (78.3%). Majority (68.3%) of the respondents were Construction workers. Sixty percent of the respondent had moderate level of mental health. The study also found that there no significant association between gender of the respondents and level of mental health of the respondents.

**KEYWORDS:** Mental health, Migrants

### INTRODUCTION

Migrant human resources, who comprise a major job force, in the unorganized sector, face various psychological stresses and turn up in a provoked mental position due to their habit of using different varieties of intoxicants. The researcher's attempt in this paper is to find out the association of addiction-related stress and social degeneration of the migrant workers with the wide web of exploitation of labour through an empirical analysis. This paper highlights the push factors as the fabricated trap to exploit the migrants physically, socially and mentally for surplus production with cheap labour. The intoxicants are the only medium for the migrants to leave the sufferings behind them for a time being.

A migrant worker is a person who migrates within a home town or outside it to pursue work. Migrant

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workers usually do not have the intention to stay permanently in the place or region in which they work. In India there has been a substantial flow of people from Bangladesh and Nepal to India over recent decades in search of better work. Researchers at the Overseas Development Institute found that these migrant workers are often subject to harassment, violence, and discrimination during their journeys at their destinations and when they return home. Migrants are more susceptible to mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and substance abuse. Migrants may use increased alcohol and other drugs to offset the stressors of migrant life, boredom, and feelings of depression and anxiety. Thus, mental health and alcohol use among migrants become a vicious cycle. The mental health status and alcohol abuse among migrant workers has been studied the

least. The researcher was interested in studying the mental health of migrant labourers of Thodupuzha Taluk, Kerala.

## DEFINITIONS

### Migrant Labour

Migrants in India are central to the informal labour force and were severely affected by the COVID-19 lockdown. Many ended up homeless and were trapped in urban areas after losing their livelihoods. Poor living and working conditions as well as a lack of systematic safeguarding for mobile and/or 'trapped' populations increases vulnerability and is exacerbated by underlying mental health conditions and wellbeing concerns, such as anxiety and post-traumatic stress related to migration and weaker support networks.

### Definition

The Encyclopedia Britannica defines migrant labour as casual and unskilled workers who move about systematically from one region to another offering their services on a temporary, usually seasonal basis. International Organization for Migration - Encyclopedia Britannica.

### Mental Health

Mental health refers to cognitive, behavioral, and emotional well-being. It is all about how people think, feel, and behave. People sometimes use the term "mental health" to mean the absence of a mental disorder.

### Statement of the problem

Today the mental health issues of migrants were found to be more especially in this Covid-19 situation which has worsened. Since the Covid-19 situation was on peak so they were asked to move to their native place, along with their mental health issues they have faced financial crisis. When the relaxation was relaxed, they were back to the work place from their home city but the swing of work has come down. This in turn has made their problems more. Thus researcher has decided to take a topic to find out the mental health status of migrants workers.

### Review of literature

**Dinesh Bhugra, (2004)** observed in his study that Migration and its accompanying stressors affect migrating individuals and their families. The process of migration is not simple or straightforward. The aim of his review was to distil existing information on how migration influences individuals' mental state and how it determines help seeking as well as pathways to care. Migration is and can be a very stress-inducing phenomenon. Yet not all migrants go through the same process. The clinician needs to be aware of coping strategies as well as resilience among

migrants. Mauro Giovanni Carta, Mariola Bernal, Maria Carolina Hardoy, Josep Maria Haro-Abad

**Clinical practice and epidemiology in mental health (2005)** found in their study that this paper is a part of the work of the group that carried out the report "The state of the mental health in Europe" (European Commission, DG Health and Consumer Protection, 2004) and deals with the mental health issues related to the migration in Europe. The paper tries to describe the social, demographical and political context of the emigration in Europe and tries to indicate the needs and (mental) health problems of immigrants. A review of the literature concerning mental health risk in immigrant is also carried out. The work also faces the problem of the health policy toward immigrants and the access to health care services in Europe. Migration during the 1990s has been high and characterized by new migrations. Some countries in Europe, which have been traditionally exporters of migrants, have shifted to become importers. Migration has been a key force in the demographic changes of the European population.

**Andres J Pumariega, Eugenio Rothe, JoAnne B Pumariega (2005)** observed their study that The United States is a country of immigrants. With the exception of Native-Americans, every other American is, or descends from, an immigrant. First and second-generation immigrant children are the most rapidly growing segment of the American population, with the great majority of this population being of non-European origin. This paper reviews the unique risk factors and mental health needs of our new immigrant populations, as well as treatment and services approaches to address their unique needs.

**Thomas G McGuire, Jeanne Miranda (2008)** found in their study that Minorities have, in general, equal or better mental health than white Americans, yet they suffer from disparities in mental health care. This paper reviews the evidence for mental health and mental health care disparities, comparing them to patterns in health Strategies for addressing disparities in health care, such as improving access to and quality of care, should also work to eliminate mental health care disparities. In addition, a diverse mental health workforce, as well as provider and patient education, are important to eliminating mental health care disparities.

## METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The researcher followed descriptive research design for the study. The research design is descriptive research design which aims to obtain information to systematically describe a phenomenon situation, or population. Research methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select,

process, and analyse information about a topic. This research provides an overview of by the migrant workers and mental health of migrant labourers. Kerala a state of southern India is witnessing large inflow of migrant Labourers from different parts of country in the recent years. Today migrant labourers have become an integral part of Kerala's economy.

The researcher followed descriptive research design for the study and Migrant Labourers in Thodupuzha taluk taken as universal of the study. The sampling technique used in this study is non-probability sampling purposive sampling methods due to the presence of universe. The size of the sample was 60 migrants. Interview schedule was used in the present study for the collection of data from the respondents.

### Finds of the Study

| S.NO | FACTORS                 | MEDIUM         | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1    | Age                     | Below -25years | 19        | 31.7           |
| 2    | Gender identity         | Male           | 47        | 78.3           |
| 3    | Education qualification | SSLC           | 23        | 38             |
| 4    | Income                  | Rs.5000-10000  | 25        | 41.7           |
| 5    | Family type             | Joint Family   | 40        | 66             |
| 6    | Marital Status          | Married        | 45        | 75             |

### Simple Percentage Analysis

- Majority (31.7%) of the respondents were in the age group between below 25yrs.
- The majority of 78.3% respondents were male.
- The less than half of 38.3% of the respondent's highest qualification is SSLC.
- Majority of the 75. % Respondents were married.
- The less than half of 41.7% of the respondents have a monthly income of Rs. 5000-10000.

More than half of 66.7% of the respondents were from joint family.

### DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS BY LEVEL OF MENTAL HEALTH

| S. No | Mental health | No. of Respondents | Percentage% |
|-------|---------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 1     | High          | 14                 | 23          |
| 2     | Moderate      | 36                 | 60          |
| 3     | Low           | 10                 | 17          |
| TOTAL |               | 60                 | 100         |

### INTERPRETATION

The above table show that (60%) of the respondents were moderate level of mental health, (23%) of the respondents were high level of mental health and (17%) of the respondents were low level of mental health.

### Influence of Personal Profile Factors and mental health of the respondents

| Variables  | Statistical Tool | Value             | Result          |
|--|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Marital Status & Mental health of the respondents  | t-test           | $P = 0.08 < 0.05$ | Significant     |
| Gender identity & Mental health of the respondents | t-test           | $P = .158 > 0.05$ | Significant     |
| Education & Mental health of the respondents       | ANOVA            | $P = .017 < 0.05$ | Not Significant |
| Income & Mental health of the respondents          | ANOVA            | $P = .822 > 0.05$ | Not Significant |
| Age & Mental health of the respondents             | ANOVA            | $P = .708 > 0.05$ | Not Significant |
| Type of Family & Mental health of the respondents  | t-test           | $P = .776 > 0.05$ | Not Significant |

- There is significant difference in the age & mental health of the respondents.
- There is significant difference in the gender identity & mental health of respondents
- There is no significant difference in the education & mental health of the respondents.
- There is no significant difference in the income & mental health of the respondents.



- There is significant difference in the marital status & mental health of the respondents.
- There is no significant difference in the Family Type & mental health of the respondents.

## SUGGESTIONS

- The unorganized sector migrant workers are not covered by any employers' social security or insurance scheme and as such regarded as a neglected workforce.
- Predominantly working in informal occupations is bound to suffer from job losses due to restricted or negative industrial growth. .
- As most of the male migrant workers are not residing with their family members, their loneliness itself makes them fall prey for mental issues like depression.
- Internal migrant workers are practically highly susceptible to new infections due to interdependent predisposing factors, related to socioeconomic status, occupational hazards, chronic malnutrition, and unhygienic living conditions.

## Conclusion

Migration is a complex process involving heterogeneity of cause's experiences that influence the mental health of migrants. The stresses of the migration process itself combined with a lack of social support a discrepancy between achievement and expectations, economic hardships, racial discrimination and harassment and a lack of access to proper housing, medical care, and religious practice can lead to poor self-esteem in ability to adjust and poor physical and mental health. This study conclude that that (60%) of the respondents were moderate level of mental health, (23%) of the respondents were high level of mental health and (17%) of the respondents were low level of mental health.

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