

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

KERALITES IN ABU DHABI: A STUDY OF UNSKILLED
AND SEMI-SKILLED KERALITE MIGRANT WORKERS
IN THE CITY OF ABU DHABI (U.A.E.)

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*To my mother, my wife and
my children.*

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ABSTRACT

Based on fieldwork carried out mainly in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates and partly in Kerala (India), this is a contribution to the study of international labour migration between South Asia and the Middle East. The thesis investigates the process of migration of unskilled and semi-skilled workers from the state of Kerala to one location in the United Arab Emirates. The study focuses on the phenomenon of migration as a process; a set of inter-related phases in which no phase can be understood independent of the others.

In most studies of labour migration to the Middle East the most important agents in the whole process of migration, the migrants, have often been overlooked. Little research has been done on the impact of migration on the migrants themselves and their dependents left behind in the sending community. The present study focuses on the migrants as the main and most important agents in the process of migration. Migration is a process in which migrants play the major role as actors and decision makers. However, while migrants play a crucial role in the process of decision making, in the process the decisions taken become materialized reality. In creating various strategies to benefit effectively from the alternatives available in the host society, migrants are, nonetheless, confronted with various constraints and restrictions since much decision making in relation to international migration is made on international and national levels. The thesis explores the migrants' role with each of these aspects in mind.

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the various factors affecting the decision to migrate as perceived by the migrants themselves, the various methods used to carry out the decisions made, the economic, working and living conditions of the migrants in the host society and the impact of migration on the migrants themselves and their households in the sending community. The findings show that Kinship and friendship networks not only influenced the decision to migrate but they facilitated the migration in all of its phases. Despite the unfavourable conditions under which these migrants were living and working, the impact of migration as perceived by the migrants and their households' members themselves was positive.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. The Research Problem

This thesis is concerned with the phenomenon of international labour migration as exemplified by the huge number of temporary⁽¹⁾ Asian migrant workers in the United Arab Emirates. More specifically, this thesis is a study of the process of migration of unskilled and semi-skilled workers from the state of Kerala in India to the city of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates.

Although Asian migrants have been present in many of the Arab States along the western coast of the Gulf since the fifties of the eighteenth century (Al-Qasimi, 1985) empirical research on Asian migration to Arab countries of the Middle East began just a few years ago. The fact that hundreds of thousands of expatriate workers from Asia flocked to the oil-rich countries of the Middle East in the period since or immediately prior to 1973 as oil prices increased dramatically, attracted the attention of individual scholars as well as international organizations such as the International Labour Organization and the World Bank.

However, almost all of the studies on Asian labour migrants to the Middle East have focussed on the period between the early 1970s and the 1980s and in searching for

explanations for such large-scale flows of Asians into the labour market of the oil-rich countries, these studies employed rather mechanistic forms of analysis such as the push/pull and the demand/supply models. Thus, studies such as those of Birks and Sinclair (1979a and 1979b), Berouti (1978), Shaw (1983), and Demery (1986) argued that labour migrants in the oil-rich countries were predominantly Arabs from the poor Arab countries (the Levantine countries, Egypt and Oman) and it was not until 1975 when the oil-rich countries embarked on their most labour-intensive stage of their development plans (the construction phase) generating a great demand for labour, that the supply of labour from other Arab countries fell well short of the increasing demand of the oil-rich countries and therefore had to turn to other labour suppliers. It was then that labour migrants from Asian sources began to pour into the oil-rich Arab countries, first from the Indian subcontinent and later from the East and South East Asian countries.

Several explanations were given for the inability of the labour supply in the labour exporting Arab countries to meet the growth in the oil-rich countries' demand for labour. Some studies argued that by 1975 the Arab labour supply was already exhausted and that there were no more potential migrant workers to meet the immediate need for labour in the oil-rich states (Birks and Sinclair, 1979b). Other studies argued that the inability of the Arab labour exporting countries to meet the increasing demand for labour in the oil-rich states was not due to the limited supply in

these countries but rather to obstacles which restricted the free mobility of labour, such as the occupational rigidities in these countries (Birks and Sinclair, 1979c), the incapability to regularize labour supply from labour-exporting Arab countries, the scarcity of capital and the lack of skills necessary to compete with Asians for large-scale projects, and the increasing awareness in the Arab labour-exporting countries of the negative effects of exporting skilled labour to the oil-rich states (Nagi, 1986).

Other studies offer different explanations, for the changing pattern of labour migration to the oil-rich countries. Some argue that the governments of the oil-rich states changed their perspective as they became aware of the various problems that may arise from depending on few sources of labour and therefore they sought to diversify their labour supply (Keely, 1980). Other studies have argued that the decision makers in the oil-rich states looked at Asian labour more favourably because Asian labour is cheaper, more productive and more suitable for the non-settlement migration policy in these countries (Birks and Sinclair, 1980; Hill, 1981).

All of these studies tended to ignore the historical context of the events leading to massive influx of labour migrants from Asian countries. "Passing reference to oil price rises and development boom in 1973-74 hardly suffices for analysis" (Keely, 1984:367). The nature of the labour

market and the pattern of labour migration in the region before the rise in oil prices and prior to the development boom must be taken into consideration in analyzing the contemporary labour movement in the region (see Appendix 1).

Moreover, almost all of the studies on international labour migration in the Middle East have tended to treat the region as one undifferentiated whole and investigate the scale and trends of migration at the aggregate level. It is probably this tendency that has led to rather misleading generalizations such as that "Initially, the labour demand (of the oil-rich countries) was generally supplied from Arab sources" (Nagi, 1986:47), and that Asian labour entered the region's labour market in the mid 1970s, when the traditional suppliers (the Arab labour exporting countries) became unable to keep up with the increasing demand for labour in the oil-rich states (Demery, 1986:17).

Looking at each individual labour-importing country on the one hand, and at the individual labour-exporting country on the other, one finds situations that differ sharply from that found at the aggregate level. In Libya and Saudi Arabia, for example, migrants from various Arab countries constituted 90.5 and 93.4 per cent respectively of the total labour migrants in 1975, whereas migrants from the Indian subcontinent formed only 1.7 and 4.9 per cent respectively. In contrast to this situation is the picture in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, where Arab labour migrants amounted to no more than 24.6 and 27.9 per cent of the total labour

migrants, whereas Asian migrants from India and Pakistan accounted for 65 and 63.2 per cent respectively (Birks and Sinclair, 1980:142). This study differs from many previous studies of migrant labour in the oil-rich countries in taking these important differences as a point of departure. Thus this thesis examines the process of migration focusing on a specific group of migrants (unskilled and semi-skilled Keralites) working in Abu Dhabi, the capital city of the U.A.E.. A study of this kind is likely to provide information for understanding the process of migration that is not likely to be found in studies using data at the aggregate level.

Moreover, reviewing the literature on international migration of labour in the Middle East one finds that these studies deal with labour migration without integrating into the analysis the important role of the private sector of the economy. This tendency to overlook the role of the private sector gives the impression that migrants' movement between the labour-exporting and the labour importing countries is entirely the business of governments. Yet, the private sector, in at least some of the labour-importing countries, accounts for much of the labour movement. In the U.A.E., for example, the private sector employed about 70 percent of the total migrants in the U.A.E. in 1980 (Al-Faris, 1983:152).

The body of literature on Asian labour migration to the Middle East can be roughly divided into two main categories. One category consists of studies that examine the subject

matter from the perspective of the labour-receiving countries. This approach is mainly concerned with the scale, trends and composition of the foreign labour inflow and the political, economic, demographic and social consequences of such large-scale foreign immigration on the host society and so on. The second category is formed of studies which deal with the subject matter from the perspective of the labour-sending countries. This approach is often concerned with issues such as remittances, problems resulting from the returning home of the migrants, the effects of large outflows of migrants on the national economy and the effects of the outflows of skilled labour on the domestic labour market and so on. These studies have provided enormous amounts of information regarding the volume of the migrant labour movement in the region, its causes and its macro-economic impacts on the sending and receiving countries. However, the most important agents in the whole process of migration, the migrants themselves, have often been overlooked. Little if any research has been done on the impact of migration on the migrants themselves and their dependents left behind in the sending community.

The present study focuses on the migrants as the main and most important agents in the process of migration. Migration is a process in which migrants play the major role as actors and decision makers. However, while migrants play a crucial role in the process of decision making, in the process the decisions taken become materialized reality. In creating various strategies to benefit effectively from the

alternatives available in the host society, migrants are, nonetheless, confronted with various constraints and restrictions, since much decision making in relation to international migration is made on international and national levels. The thesis explores the migrants' role with each of these aspects in mind.

2. Content and Objectives

The present study was carried out to investigate the process of migration of a specific group of single Asian labour migrants working in the U.A.E.. It seeks to show how the present situation of the migrants is rooted in the process of migration, of which migrants constitute but one element, albeit an important one. In other words, based on the migrants retrospection⁽²⁾ the study attempt to reconstruct the conditions under which the decision to migrate was taken and the various ways adopted to make these decisions become reality and then to relate these processes to the type of work migrants are engaged in, their patterns of residence and the various procedures taken by them to overcome difficulties confronting them in the host society. To achieve this goal a series of important questions had to be answered: what were the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of these migrants on the eve of migration? why and when did these Keralites move to work in Abu Dhabi? how were they recruited? what did these migrant workers do in Abu Dhabi? what did they earn, save and remit back home? where and how did they live in the host country? what were

the relationships between these migrants and other groups in the host society? and what were the impacts of migration on the migrants and their family members left behind?

Other objectives of the study can be grasped from the chapter headings denoting the plan and contents of the thesis. The study is divided into ten chapters. The first chapter is an introduction in which the research problem and the objectives of the study are discussed and the contents of the thesis are outlined. This chapter also discusses the methodological procedures and techniques of investigation used in the study, and finally it provides the reader with a brief review of the major approaches to the study of migrant labour.

Migrants' situation in the host country cannot be fully understood without looking into the specific context of the sending community. In Chapter Two the specific context of Kerala State is examined and some of Kerala's salient features which might have some impact on emigration from this state are outlined. This chapter provides the reader with detailed information about the demographic, social and economic features of Kerala.

The discussion in Chapter Three to Nine is based on information obtained during the fieldwork. Chapter Three provides a profile of the Keralite immigrants working in Abu Dhabi and their households back in Kerala.

Chapter Four examines the process of migration in the pre-migration phase. Here the reasons for migration as the migrants perceived them are examined. The sources of, and ways by which migrants obtain, information about the host country are discussed. This chapter also investigates the ways in which the migrants secured entrance to the U.A.E., the costs incurred in the process and how these costs were financed.

The present conditions of the migrants in the host country are examined in some detail in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. In Chapter Five the working condition of the migrants are investigated. This chapter deals with topics such as ways of securing employment in Abu Dhabi, first contact on arrival, waiting period between arrival in the host country and first employment, number of jobs taken by the migrants and so on. Their economic conditions are discussed in Chapter Six. Here earnings, expenditures, savings and remittances are examined. Methods of sending, and recipients of, remittances are also explored in this chapter. Chapter Seven examines the housing conditions in the U.A.E. in general and in Abu Dhabi in particular and considers how these conditions have affected the housing of the Keralite immigrants. It also deals with the cultural factors that may have affected the housing arrangements of my informants.

Chapter Eight discusses the Keralites' relationships with other groups in the host country, their relationships

with each other within the Keralite group and their relationship with their relatives back in Kerala. Kinship and village-kin networks are also examined in this chapter.

The impact of migration is discussed in Chapter Nine. This chapter looks at some impacts of migration on the economies of India and Kerala state and then examines in some detail the economic and social impact of migration on the migrants' households.

Finally, Chapter Ten summarizes and discusses the major findings of the study and draws some conclusions from these findings. It also states the limitations of the study and provides some suggestions for further research.

3. Research Methodology and Fieldwork

Since this study is mainly about the Keralites already in Abu Dhabi the greater part of the fieldwork was conducted in Abu Dhabi and lasted for about fourteen months from October 1987 to December 1988. This was followed by a relatively short visit to Kerala where the researcher conducted an exploratory study, visiting some of the migrants' households. The main objective of this part of the fieldwork, which lasted from the beginning of January 1989 to the end of March of the same year, was to collect as much data and literature on Kerala and its people as possible and to assess in a rather general way the socio-economic consequences of migration of male Keralites on their households and family members left back home.

3.1. The Fieldwork in Abu Dhabi

The present study considers the single, temporary, unskilled and semi-skilled Keralite labour migrants working in Abu Dhabi, the capital city of the United Arab Emirates. The decision to study Keralite migrants rather than any other Indian migrants was made on the following basis.

First, Keralites form the largest group among all Indian groups in Abu Dhabi. Although there are no officially available statistics on this group or any other groups of immigrants, it is obvious to any ordinary observer that Keralite immigrants in the U.A.E constitute the largest Indian community. There is also some scattered information in the literature on Keralite migrants to the Middle East which provides some support for this general assumption. In 1985 there were at least 250,000 Indian workers in the U.A.E. (Nair, 1986a:5) and since Kerala accounts for at least 50 per cent of all the Indian migrants in the Middle East countries (Nair, 1986b:70 and 1988:7) it is reasonable to assume that at least one half of the Indian migrants in the U.A.E. comes from Kerala state and the other half comes from other states⁽³⁾. Thus it is interesting to investigate why a small state such as Kerala accounts for such a large proportion of Indian migrants in the U.A.E..

Second, unlike other Asian migrants, Indian migrants have been present in the U.A.E. and other Arab Gulf states for a long time and this would give the study an historical dimension often neglected by studies on Asian labour

migrants to the Middle East. Moreover, unlike other Asian migrants such as those from Bangladesh and Afghanistan, Indian migrants, particularly Keralites, are engaged in all kinds of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs (they are also found in skilled and professional jobs) in both public and private sectors. Since one major concern of this study is to investigate the socio-economic conditions of the unskilled and semi-skilled migrants in Abu Dhabi, this group was seen to be ideal for the purpose.

Keralite immigrants engaged in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs lived in clusters of houses in the few slum quarters of the city of Abu Dhabi. It was not practical for the researcher to survey each of these areas separately. The researcher, therefore, concentrated his research on one of these slum quarters located in the area of Madinat Zayed, where a sizeable number (about 15,00) of single Keralites live. Comparable settlements do exist in other areas in Abu Dhabi such as the areas of Powerhouse and Da'erat Elmeyah, as well as in the industrial area of Mussafah. From several brief visits to these areas during the pilot study the researcher has no reason to believe that there are substantial differences between the Keralites' settlement in Madinat Zayed and their settlements in the other areas. Any of these settlements could have served the purpose of the study. I selected Madinat Zayed as the location for my research because in this settlement I had some contacts already established⁽⁴⁾. The help I received from my contacts was invaluable, as will be discussed shortly.

3.1.1 The Large Scale Interview

There were at least 1,500 Keralites in this community. They lived in 50 of the old houses which had been abandoned by owners who had moved to live in better residential areas (more detailed description of the settlement is given in Chapter 8). At first the intention was to make a quick survey of all of the fifty houses to obtain a general idea of the characteristics of the population and then randomly choose a few houses for the detailed in-depth study. However, from the preliminary investigation which I conducted during the pilot study I realized that the number of Keralites in each of these houses varied significantly. Some houses sheltered as many as seventy persons or more, whereas other houses were occupied by ten Keralites only. Moreover, the distribution of the Keralites in these houses was not random. It was affected by place of origin in Kerala, kinship and affinity. Therefore the researcher decided to interview all the Keralites in these fifty houses.

The interviews were conducted using an interview schedule (Appendix 2) which was designed to obtain as detailed quantitative information as possible to cover the main issues of the study. Thus the interview schedule contained a series of questions which seemed most appropriate to the aims of the present study. One set of questions is on the socio-economic characteristics of these Keralites and their households in Kerala; these include age,

marital status, education, vocational training, work experience and so on. Another set is on the process of moving from Kerala to Abu Dhabi; this includes reason for migration, sources of information about the host country, recruiting methods, financing the initial cost of migration and so on. A third set covers the migrants' present situation in Abu Dhabi such as their working, economic and living conditions in Abu Dhabi (for more details see appendix 2).

Almost all of the interviews were conducted in the evenings and at night (from 4 pm to 10 pm) when the migrants were at home. During the daytime, almost all of the migrants were at work and a few only, those who were working night shifts or unemployed at the time of the study, were found at home. Mornings were used for writing up notes and draft reports on my observations.

Gaining access to these Keralites and interviewing them, however, was neither a straightforward procedure nor an easy task. One just cannot intrude in peoples' lives, banging on their doors and subjecting them to one's intensive questions. It took me almost three months before I was able to overcome the barriers of suspicion, fear and distrust which stood between me and the Keralite migrants in this community. I had to ".... change from clumsy alien to friendly stranger" as Fried once wrote (5).

In my case I was a little more than just a clumsy alien. The Keralites perceived me as a local Arab whose real

intentions were not clear to them. Later I was told that they were not sure of what I was doing. The type of questions I was asking, such as: how did you come to Abu Dhabi? how did you get your visa? did you have to buy your visa? and so on, frightened them and made them suspicious and cautious. They thought I was working for the Migration Department or for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and that I was investigating their legal and working status. It took me a longer time and more effort than I anticipated to gain the trust of these Keralites and build some sort of rapport with them in order to finish my research.

During the pilot study I established a good relationship with three Keralites who later became three life-history cases in the in-depth study. Two of them, Abdulsatar and Mohammed, I had first met in 1975, when I was working in the Social Service Department in The Ministry of Education. They used to work in the same department as caretakers. Although I had not seen them since I left the Ministry of Education in 1980 and joined the U.A.E. University, they received me with a very warm welcome. They knew that I was working in the University so it did not take long to explain to them about my objectives and convince them that I was doing this research for academic purposes and nothing else.

Abdulsatar and Mohammed became my initial contacts in the settlement. They promised to help me in any way they could, and they did. They introduced me to their room-mates

and went with me to every single room in the house introducing me to other residents. I spent over two weeks going every day to either Abdulsatar's or Mohammed's house and spending the evenings and part of the night with them. During the first few days I just spent the time in their rooms, watching a film which they had rented from a video club or sitting with them in front of their rooms where all of the Keralites in the house could see me talking to their house-mate, playing cards with them or having a meal with them. From time to time I visited the residents of the other rooms and had tea with them. I tried to be as friendly and as patient as possible. I tried to strike up a conversation with those who showed some curiosity and interest in what I was doing. I also visited the Indian Islamic Centre a few times, accompanied by either Abdulsatar or Mohammed. Although it was called the Indian Islamic Centre, the great majority (over 90 per cent) of its members are Keralites. Visiting the Centre was very rewarding, as will be discussed shortly.

By the end of the second week I became known to almost all of the Keralites in the two houses where Abdulsatar and Mohammed lived. I had also made contact with Abdulsatar's and Mohammed's friends who lived in different houses but used to come and visit them. I arranged with some of them to visit them in their houses where they could introduce me to their room-mates and other Keralites in the house. It was then and during my visit to one of these houses where Abdulsatar's friends lived that I met Ashraf, the third

Keralite with whom I established a strong relationship. He became a very good friend of mine and accompanied me during my fieldwork in Kerala.

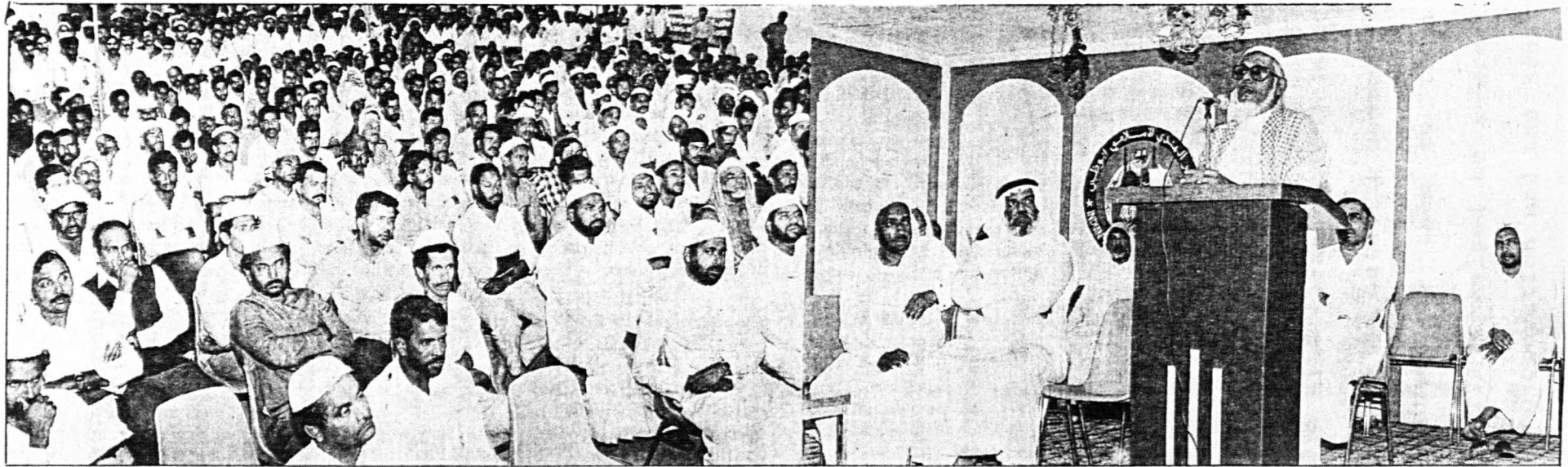
Ashraf was in his late thirties. He was very intelligent and had two years of college education or, as the Keralites used to say, a pre-degree education. He was very keen to know everything about myself and my work, as he always wanted to write something about the life of the Keralites who are working in the U.A.E.. This interest of his brought him close to me and soon we became close friends. He was a very active member in both the Kerala Social Centre and the Malayali Society, two main Keralite voluntary associations. I went with him to these centres where he introduced me to the management committee and some of the members who happened to be in the centre at the time. Every member in these associations seemed to know Ashraf. They seemed to trust him very much. I spent some time in these centres talking to the members about my study.

Visiting the Kerala Social Centre, the Malayali Society and the Indian Islamic Centre was of great consequence as far as gaining access to the Keralite community and earning the trust of my respondents was concerned. In the Indian Islamic Centre, for example, I met with the Keralites' religious leaders who, after discussing my research objectives with me, promised to help in any way they could. I requested them to inform me in advance about any important events or religious activities in the centre. Thus I was

invited to the centre on many occasions, but one of these occasions was of particular importance because it took place just a few weeks after I started my fieldwork.

This was when Mr. K. T. Manu, a famous Indian religious scholar from Samasta Kerala Jamiyatul Ulama (Religion Scholar Association of Samasta Kerala), visited the centre in Abu Dhabi and gave a speech to an audience of hundreds of Keralites. I talked to him about my research just before he addressed the audience. I thought that if I could make this man trust me, then all of the others would. After he had finished his talk he introduced me to them and asked them to cooperate with me. He then gave me the opportunity to address them for a few minutes. The result was more than I expected. Almost immediately after the event was over, many Keralites surrounded me and bombarded me with their questions. I did not mind them interviewing me. In the centre I also met Dr. T. Jamal Mohammed who was present at the time. He was very excited about my research and offered his services any time I needed his help. He also presented me with a copy of his doctoral thesis, "The Gujarati in Kerala: a Study of Socio-Economic Interaction", which was of great value to me when I was writing the chapter about Kerala.

When I went on the second day afternoon to carry on with my interviews in one of the Keralites' houses, I was surprised at the way the Keralites in each room received me even those who had not attended the meeting in the centre. I



K.T. Manu, an Indian religious scholar from Samasta Kerala Jamiyatul Ulema, speaking at a meeting organised by Markaz Tarbiyatul Islamia and Malik bin Deenar Islamic Complex Committee at the Indian Islamic Centre in Abu Dhabi

The Khaleej Times, 15/12/1987.

Plate 1:

Appearing in public with some distinguished Keralites who are very well known to the Keralite community in Abu Dhabi, and being introduced by them to their audiences, made my job much easier. It helped me a great deal in gaining the respect, the co-operation and the trust of my respondents.

discovered that the morning newspaper had communicated to them a report about the meeting in the centre. However, what was important as far as I and my research were concerned was the picture in that report. In the picture I was seen sitting in the first row on the stage from which Mr. Manu delivered his speech (see Plate 1). This picture made me known to a large number of the Keralites. Realizing the effect of such contact with some important and outstanding Keralite persons, I asked Ashraf to put me in contact with such people and inform me if any distinguished person from Kerala should visit Abu Dhabi, and he did.

With Ashraf's help, I was able to meet with Mr. K. Ebraheem Kutti, then deputy Mayor of Trivandrum City corporation, Mr. Chandrasheakaran, then Minister of Education of Kerala, and Dr. C. K. Kareem, a distinguished historian, when they visited the U.A.E.. My relationship with Dr. Kareem developed very strongly and has continued up to this day. We write to each other from time to time. He provided me with invaluable literature on Kerala including his precious books: Kerala Under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan, published in 1973, and What Happened In Indian History, published in 1971.

In short, appearing in public with these distinguished Keralites, who are very well known to the Keralite community in Abu Dhabi, and being introduced by them to their audiences, made my job much easier. It helped me a great deal in gaining the respect, the co-operation and the trust

of my respondents. Thus, the fear and suspicion which were reflected in their unwillingness to co-operate and respond to a formal interview began to weaken gradually and by the end of the third month of my fieldwork my research proceeded very smoothly as I came to be accepted not only by the Keralites under investigation but by the Keralite community at large. Now, the Keralites themselves were looking for me, Keralite reporters were visiting me at my house in Abu Dhabi and the Keralite migrants were stopping me in the market place to talk to me and invite me to their houses.

By the end of December my fieldwork in Abu Dhabi was completed. My goal had been to interview all of the Keralite migrants living in this community. However, I was running out of time and some of the migrants were still unwilling to be interviewed, while others were in Kerala on holiday. Although only 1027 Keralites, forming little more than 68 per cent of the Keralites in the community, had been interviewed, including the sixty five Keralites who became subjects of full case histories, I therefore decided not to undertake any further interviews.

3.1.2 Observation

Although most of the first three months was spent in gaining access to the Keralite community and developing relationships with my respondents, it allowed me to get a reasonably clear picture of the community under investigation and to observe some of the interactions that were going on in the migrants' rooms, in their houses, and

in the settlement as a whole. Observation, which was an important technique used to collect data for this research, was not confined to this period but continued over the time of the fieldwork in Abu Dhabi and in the migrants' villages in Kerala. Many observations were made and later recorded.

It is very difficult to say when my observation started. It probably began long before I started my research, as I have been in direct contact with Keralites since 1975. Some of them worked as caretakers in the Social Department in the Ministry of Education where I used to work as a social worker. As I mentioned earlier, a friendly relationship had developed between me and them and I had come to know a great deal about the Keralites and their experience in Abu Dhabi. As a resident in the same city I have inevitably interacted with individuals not only from the Keralite group but also from other groups in various situations and in different places. Thus it is quite difficult to ascertain when my observation started and how my previous experience with the Keralites and the migrants in general affected my observation in the community under study or influenced my research as a whole. As Francis once wrote:

... most of the time we engage in (observation) with little or no conscious effort, and without even being aware of doing so ... But, while we are all constantly observing, the way we observe varies from situation to situation and what we observe is always selective. The more familiar we are with a particular situation, the less careful are we about the way we observe what is 'going on' in and around it (1988:51)⁽⁶⁾.

It is almost impossible to list the data obtained by way of direct observation only. However, there was some specific information that was collected largely through direct observation, such as the housing conditions in this settlement, the way of life in the settlement, the social interaction, and the various activities that took place in these houses.

3.1.3. The In-Depth Study (Life Histories)

In this part of my fieldwork a purposive sample of 65 Keralite migrants were interviewed in-depth to obtain in the form of detailed life histories a more qualitative type of information on their experience from the time they decided to seek employment abroad to the time of the study. This in-depth qualitative information was then used for further clarification in the discussion of the issues raised in the study and as illustrations and accounts of typical experiences.

The fact that the 65 Keralites in the in-depth study were purposively selected using what is known as "judgement and opportunistic sampling techniques"⁽⁷⁾ rather than random sampling was based on certain considerations. First, the selection of the respondents needed to be related to the exploratory study which was to be conducted in Kerala. Thus, only those who were willing to give me their permission to visit their households back in Kerala and talk to their family members were selected. They, therefore, had to provide me with the addresses of their households and

letters introducing me to their family members. Several of the Muslim and Hindu migrants were unwilling to give me their consent to visit their families in Kerala. This was most probably because of certain traditions. As some of the Muslim migrants explained, there were only women and children left in the house and for a stranger to visit such a household might invoke the neighbours' suspicion about the nature of the visit and might damage the reputation of the household in the village. Some of the migrants apologized in a very polite way, saying that I would not be able to find my way to their houses as they lived in remote villages to which transportation is very scarce and infrequent. This turned out to be quite true, as will be explained in the following paragraphs.

Second, the selection of the subjects depended also on their willingness to co-operate and give me further details about their life and their experience, not only in Kerala but also in Abu Dhabi. Although many of the Keralites under investigation had acknowledged that their entrance to the U.A.E. was secured through visas bought for them by a relative or friend, very few of them were willing to proceed further and discuss with me the process by which visas were obtained. This may have affected the willingness of some migrants to cooperate in the in-depth study. Some of the migrants just did not have the time to spend hours talking to me. Thus, their readiness to bear with me for a long time over more than one session was taken into consideration.

Another factor affecting the selection of the sample was the researcher's desire to cover a wide range of migrants in terms of type of job, employment sector, religion, marital status, number of years in the host country and place of origin in Kerala. As will be seen in the chapters, the experience of a Keralite who works as a domestic helper differs significantly from that of a caretaker in the government sector or a self employed person and so on.

Some of the Keralites were very enthusiastic during the large-scale interviews and tended to expand in their answers and provide information far beyond my questions. I listened to them very carefully and gave them enough time to express themselves without any interruption from my side. Given their enthusiasm and their willingness to participate positively in the research, I asked each of them if he would, at his convenience, give me further details about himself and discuss with me his migratory experience. If he responded positively I would then either continue with him the in-depth discussion or arrange another time to meet and continue our discussion. Most of the respondents in the in-depth study came from these enthusiastic migrants who responded positively when I asked them to be subjects of detailed life histories. Some of the detailed study's subjects, however, were recruited with the help of other subjects of the in-depth study. As the discussion with one respondent came to an end I would ask him to put me in touch with any of his relatives or friends who was willing to give

me further detailed information about himself and then ask this informant to help me find another one and so on. Such technique in selecting informants is known as "snowball sampling" (Burgess, 1987:53).

It took between two to four session for each life history to be completed and each session took between 45 to 75 minutes. The great majority (49 persons) of the subjects in the in-depth study did not mind recording their accounts on tape recorder except when they talked about some sensitive issues such as the way they had obtained their visas or how they corrected their illegal status in the host country and the like. At such points in our conversation I was often asked to stop the tape recorder. The other 16 informants objected to the tape recorder and I refrained from taking notes while they were talking. Thus I was faced with the difficulty of recording what had been said during at least 45 minutes, depending on my memory. Therefore, I tried to write down what had been said immediately after each interviewing session was over.

3.2. The Exploratory Study in Kerala

This part of the fieldwork was carried out in Kerala from January to March 1989. Initially it was an exploratory study and as such I arrived in Kerala without any detailed plan as to how I should carry out the actual fieldwork. Although I had in mind some broad idea about what I was going to do in Kerala, I was not really sure where or how I was going to do it. I had a few things in my mind that I

needed to accomplish in this trip. For one, I wanted to collect as much data and literature on Kerala and its people as possible. This was accomplished successfully, thanks to my friend Ashraf who volunteered to accompany me to Kerala and stayed with me almost all the time as friend, guide and interpreter.

In Kerala, Ashraf introduced me to his friend Mr. N. R. S. Babu, Chief of News Bureau in the Kerala Kaumudi Newspaper. Mr. Babu not only provided me with some of the literature and statistics about Kerala but he introduced me to those who were familiar with the subject I am interested in and who had made quite a few studies on Keralite returned migrants. He put me in touch with Dr. P. R. Gopinathan Nair, the Professor of Economics at the University of Kerala, and with Professor I. S. Gulati in the Department of Economics and Statistics, Trivandrum, who in turn introduced me to Dr. Leela Gulati in the Centre for Development Studies in Ulloor. Thanks to these three people, who provided me with most of the literature on the subject, including that which they themselves had written, I was able to fulfil one of the tasks I had in mind in this trip. The rest of the literature, I collected myself from the library of the University of Kerala and from the library of the Centre for Development Studies.

Mr. Babu also arranged for me to meet with some important men in the state's government such as the Chief Minister Mr. E. K. Nayanar, whom I met at his office in

Trivandrum, and the Labour Minister Mr. K. Pankajakshan, whom I visited at his residence. I did not plan to meet these people before I come to Kerala; however, talking to them provided me with a broad idea about how the migrants' issue was perceived from the government point of view.

The second task I had in mind was to visit some of the villages and the households from which my respondents in Abu Dhabi had come. The main purpose was to talk to the migrants' families in an attempt to learn about the excessive outflows of male Keralites to the Middle East and to acquire some understanding of the various socio-economic effects of migration on the households and the community of origin.

I knew from the few published studies on Keralite returned migrants and from my own work in Abu Dhabi that although every district in Kerala had contributed to the outflow of workers to the Middle East some districts had contributed more than others. Since the great majority of the Keralite migrants to the Middle East are Muslims, the districts, sub-districts and villages with substantial Muslim populations were leading in their contribution to the outflow of workers. However, there are two areas well known in Kerala for their leading role in contributing to the outflow of migrants. These were Chavakkad area in Trichur district and Varkkalla area in Trivandrum district. I made sure that I visited these two areas first and then found my way to some other places.

The first household I visited was Ashraf's in Kulamuttom village which is located in Varkkalla Municipality in Trivandrum district. There I met Ashraf's elder brothers, Aslam and Hagh, his mother, his sister, his wife and his little daughter. I was received with very warm hospitality. I stayed in this village for four days as a guest in Ashraf's house. After that I stayed in the Government Guest House in Trivandrum city. During these four days in Kulamuttom village, Ashraf and I located five other migrants' households. Ashraf introduced me to the migrants' families and I gave them the letters I had brought with me from Abu Dhabi. My first visit to each of these houses was mainly to introduce myself to the migrant's family and to inform them about the purpose of my visit. Once this was done I would then arrange a mutually convenient time to come and visit them again. In many cases I had to visit each house more than once in order to talk to as many members of the household as possible. This in itself was not an easy thing to do. I had to travel every day for about sixty-five kilometers or so from Trivandrum city to Kulamuttom village and back. Because of the poor transportation facilities, the distance between Trivandrum city and Kulamuttom village seemed even further, and if I was lucky I would make the trip in three hours each way. I spent 45 days in Trivandrum district. Most of the time, about twenty-five days, was spent searching in the libraries for relevant literature. The rest of the time was spent in Kulamuttom village.

From Trivandrum, Ashraf and I began our journey to Trichur district to visit the Kadappuram village in Chavakkad sub-district where I visited seven households. On our way to Trichur we stopped in Quilon to see two migrants' households, one in Puthenthura village and the other in Mayyanadu village. We also visited the village of Thankassery as Ashraf wanted to deliver a letter and some money to the wife of a friend of his who was working in Abu Dhabi. We spent four days only in Quilon after which we continued our trip to Chavakkad in Trichur district.

It is common knowledge in Kerala that Chavakkad sub-district is at the top of all other areas in Kerala in terms of its contribution to the outflow of workers to the Middle East. This is most likely true. I was told that every other house in the Kadappuram village has contributed one or more of its members to the outflow of workers to the Gulf countries. My stay in Chavakkad lasted for twenty days. During the first fifteen days Ashraf and I stayed at small motel in Chavakkad city and went to the village every day. By the end of these fifteen days Ashraf had to go back to Trivandrum, so I left the motel to stay with Husain, who offered to be my host for my last five days in the village.

Before Ashraf left for Trivandrum we had arranged with one of Ashraf's friends, Ali, from Chavakkad city, to accompany me to Malappuram district where I was to visit few other households in Cundore village. Ali was a returned-migrant who was waiting for another opportunity to go back

to the Gulf. He went with me to Cundore village where we spent ten days as guests at the house of Ali's friend, Abdulhagh, who also was one of those who had returned from the Gulf. Abdulhagh, however, was a rather successful migrant who had worked in the U.A.E. for more than fifteen years. He had built a rather large house and invested his savings in a bakery shop.

Before leaving Abu Dhabi for Kerala I had been very confused and worried, as I had many questions in my mind, for which I did not have answers. Was it possible for me, a complete stranger, to carry out my fieldwork in Kerala's villages? How I would be received by the migrants' households? Would they accept me and talk to me? How should I start my investigation? Where would I stay? Questions like these bothered me all the way from Abu Dhabi to Kerala in spite of Ashraf's attempts to comfort me. However, the warm welcome and hospitality I received from Ashraf's family, their willingness to listen to what I had to say and patiently answer my questions, encouraged me and I started to gain confidence. The letters which I brought with me from my respondents in Abu Dhabi were of great help. My interest in learning about their way of life seemed to have been taken positively by members of the migrants' households.

Initially, I wanted to visit at least forty households in different villages but unfortunately because of various practical reasons I was unable to see all of these households and had to settle for twenty households only.

Some of the households which I planned to visit were located in remote, almost isolated, villages and transportation to and from these villages was inadequate and infrequent. In some cases, because of transportation problems, it took me two or three days to locate one household. Some other households were impossible to find even though the addresses I was given in Abu Dhabi were very clear.

Moreover, like most researchers doing fieldwork, I had limited time and resources. By the end of March, my third month in Kerala, I had managed to locate and meet with the members of twenty migrants' households located in various villages in five of different districts. These households formed fifty per cent of the households which I had intended to visit. If I was to locate the other twenty households I would have had to stay in Kerala for another three months. I could not afford to do so. Hence, satisfied with what I had accomplished, I left Kerala for Abu Dhabi and from there travelled to Britain.

4. Themes on Migrant Labour

The phenomenon of migration has been a subject of investigation for a variety of disciplines such as sociology, social anthropology, demography, geography, economics, political science, linguistics, psychology and others. Moreover, scholars from each of these disciplines have dealt with the subject matter from various perspectives. This is particularly true in the case of sociology. One finds several sociological approaches to the

study of migration and migrant labour. Each of these approaches contributes a great deal to our understanding of the complex phenomenon of migration. In the following pages an attempt will be made to review some of these approaches to, and themes on, migrant labour.

4.1. Race Relations Approach

It is often argued that the sociological study of migrant labour in Britain has been largely developed within the sociology of race relations (French, 1986). The arrival in Britain of a relatively large number of coloured immigrants⁽⁸⁾ from Britain's ex-colonies in the 1950s and 1960s created a situation in which interaction and conflict between these physically different immigrants and the indigenous people were inevitable. The distinctive physical appearance (black skin) of these immigrants was often referred to in order to conceptualize the interaction and conflict between them and the indigenous population as "race relations" (Miles, 1982). This was so much so that the studies of race relations were confined to coloured immigrants and the term immigrants became synonymous with black people (Castles and Kosack, 1985).

In his writings, Rex provided one of the best examples of this approach⁽⁹⁾. In an attempt to explain and account for the inferiority of the coloured immigrants in terms of their employment, housing, and educational status, Rex (1970) examined the relationship between class structure and race. He asserted that race should be analyzed as a social

category. Like any social category, race depends for its existence on its subjective meanings in the minds of the people. In Rex's words:

Social categories depend for their existence on the subjective definition given to them by social actors. Race is no exception. So long as it exists in the minds of men there will be men who can be helped to fight against the buttressing of injustice by the use of pseudo-scientific beliefs (1970:192).

Thus the idea of race results in race relations situations and the task of the sociology of race relations is to identify these situations and study them. Rex argues that race relation situations arise in certain types of social and historical structures which can be identified and studied. Focusing on the colonial structures where unfree labour predominated, Rex considered various forms of colonial societies and examined the social relations which characterize their production systems and the means used to produce a labour supply. Then he analyzed the social stratification of these societies and suggested that colonial structures which are characterized by unfree labour, ethnic pluralism, and coercive sanctions

make it more likely that the unequal treatment meted out to members of different groups in the colonial case will come to be characterized by racist ideas and beliefs and by racialist practice (1970:87)

Thus, these characteristics allow the colonised population who are located at the bottom of the social stratification

of the colonial society to be perceived and treated as inferior.

Rex (1970:160) concluded that a race relation situation occurs when three necessary (but not sufficient) conditions are fulfilled. These are:

1) When two or more groups of people with distinct characteristics and identities co-exist in a single political and economic system in a context of inequality where one group denies the other groups equal access to social and economic resources.

2) When there is a high degree of conflict between these groups and the disadvantaged groups are identified and their movements are limited by certain ascriptive signs which are believed to be unalterable.

3) When the unequal relations between the groups involved are justified in terms of various deterministic beliefs and theories.

In the post-colonial era, most of the former colonialist societies have natives of the former colonies living among them. These societies assign the social status of migrants according to their race and allocate their position in the social stratification accordingly. Thus the Negroes are located at the bottom of the social stratification scale, the Asians in the middle and the Europeans at the top. The low status of the black migrant in the post-colonial societies according to Rex "has much to do

with the fact that he comes from a people who were more unfree than others" (1970:42). Thus coloured immigrants from ex-colonial societies differ in their chances of assimilation into the stratification system of the post-colonial societies and the black immigrants are specially disadvantaged. Thus the position of the immigrants is not only determined by their political and economic status but also by their race, physical appearance and their identification and image as a migrant group. Rex, therefore, argued that the position of the colonial immigrants would be in a place "beneath the bottom of the stratification system" or "outside of it". Such exclusion from the stratification system of the post-colonial societies is likely to be permanent and therefore colonial immigrants are not likely to be assimilated.

Since immigrants are discriminated against on the basis of their race and allocated roles in the backward sector of the productive system their experiences are different from those of the indigenous working class and therefore they do not form part of the native working class. Instead, they constitute an "underclass", which is an element structurally distinct from the established native working class (Rex, 1973; Rex and Tomlinson, 1979).

This approach to migrant labour has received much criticism for its use of racial discrimination to explain the low-status position of migrant labour (Handdon, 1976; Dahya, 1974; Bourne, 1980; Gilroy, 1980; Miles, 1982;

Phizacklea and Miles, 1980 and Phizacklea, 1984). Miles (1982) and Phizacklea (1984) argue that the position of the migrants cannot be explained by reference to their race. By focusing on colour in its analysis of migration, the sociology of race relations has distorted the reality of the migrants' situation in Britain. Therefore, Miles (1982) asserts that the concept of black immigrants should be replaced by the concept of labour migration, a concept which helps

... to consider the most recent instances of "immigration" in the wider context of vast spatial movements of population required by the development of capitalism as both a national and an international phenomenon (1982:5).

Miles (1982) and Phizacklea (1984) argue that since analytically distinct racial categories do not exist, race becomes an ideological construction and as such it cannot be studied objectively in a scientific manner.

The perspective of race relations is also criticized for its tendency to analyze the migrants' position in the various sectors of employment, housing and education in terms of discrimination and in isolation from other structural factors and for its tendency of separating class relationship from the means of production (Phizacklea, 1984). By subjectively defining class, the race relation perspective ignores the significant role of relations of production. This is considered to be misleading because

... by entering a 'metropolitan society' the migrant necessarily enters and takes up a

position within a set of forces and relations of production (Miles, 1982:37)

Thus, instead of considering immigrants as occupying a class beneath or outside the working class (an underclass) and therefore isolating their situation from the means of production, Phizacklea and Miles (1980) argue that immigrants in the capitalist societies occupy a specific position within the class structure. Hence, race becomes one of the various factors which contribute to the inferior position of the migrants within the working class.

4.2. Historical Structural Perspective

Another perspective, known collectively as the historical structural approach, analyses migration using various models and frameworks, such as the "dependency theory" model (Portes and Burawoy, 1976; Cardoso and Faletto, 1979), the "internal colonialism" model (Walton, 1975) and the "centre periphery" model (Portes and Walton, 1981; Sassen-Koob, 1980). This perspective is based upon Marxist ideas and draws its principal insight from Marx's historical materialism (Wood, 1982).

In this perspective, the national and international movement of waged labour is conceived as an inter-change between different modes of productions. In this inter-change the capitalist mode systematically exploits the non-capitalist mode of production and as a result the economic disparity between the two becomes greater than ever (French, 1986). One form of such exploitation is that the cost of

reproducing the labour force is always met in the non-capitalist periphery, long before migrants come to the capitalist areas, where they are employed. Thus, while migrant labourers depend for their maintenance upon the economies of their countries of employment, they depend upon their home economies for their reproduction. In Burawoy's words:

A system of migrant labour is characterized by the institutional differentiation and physical separation of the processes of renewal and maintenance. Accordingly, migrant labour entails a dual dependence upon employment in one place and alternate economy and/or state in another (1981:1050).

When capitalism penetrates into non-capitalist areas it creates a situation in which the working population is displaced and the problems of unemployment and under-employment are increased. As a result, people are compelled to move from the periphery to the industrial capitalist centres (Amin, 1974; Portes, 1979; Portes and Walton, 1981). According to this view, labour migration is generated by capitalist penetration in the traditional, non-capitalist areas and not by stagnation or backwardness in these areas. This perspective argues that migrants have no control of their system, which forces them to move from traditional areas of non-capitalist modes of production to capitalist areas. In Abu-Lughod's words:

Human beings, like iron filings, were impelled by forces beyond their conscious control and, like atoms stripped of their cultural and temporal diversity, were denied

creative capacity to innovate and shape the world from which and into which they moved (1975:201).

According to this perspective, therefore, migration of labour is seen as benefiting the receiving countries to the detriment of the sending countries (Castles and Kosack, 1973; Castells, 1975; Sassen-Koob, 1980). If the total cost of raising migrants from the day they are born to the day they migrate is considered, then migration becomes a real loss to the sending countries. Sending areas' losses to the receiving areas include the loss of their younger and healthiest members, who are better educated and better trained (Burawoy, 1975); the costs of educating and training these migrants before they migrate (Sen, 1986) and so on. Contrary to what has been argued, that migrants acquire various skills in the receiving countries and that this forms a potential benefit for the sending areas, there is increasing evidence that migrants lose rather than accrue skills because of their concentration in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs (Castles and Kosack, 1973; Halliday, 1977; Sen, 1986). A study comparing the skill level of migrant workers in Europe, both before and after migration, found that the great majority of the unskilled Turkish migrants did not acquire any real skills (Pain, 1974).

Moreover, many authors have cast doubt upon the economic benefits of remittances to the sending countries. One may accept that remittances may produce short term benefits, such as improving the living standards of the migrants' families, who are left behind, ease the trade

deficit and boost consumption levels, but the economy as a whole does not improve significantly, since remittances are not invested productively (Castles and Kosack, 1973).

Despite the advantage of placing migration within global, historical and political context, this macro-level approach of the dependency school has several disadvantages. This approach is accused of being static. It views migration as essentially a result of an unalterable system of exploitation in which the receiving areas are the exploiting and the sending areas are the exploited. The process of labour migration has significantly changed over time and will continue to change. This model does not account for such changes. Portes comments:

This approach is partially static in that it ends with the image of an entrenched and essentially unalterable system of exploitation (1978:19).

To overcome this difficulty, different models have to be adopted. Portes (1978), Zolberg (1979) and Sassen-Koob (1981), have developed a framework which analyses migration as part of the dynamics of a single unit, the world capitalist system. According to this model, the migrant-sending and migrant-receiving areas are viewed as inter-dependent areas linked by the international capitalist system. The focus of attention in this model is shifted. Instead of viewing one area being exploited by another as external process between two separate units, it focuses upon the various economical and political relationships, which

are formed between the elite groups in both sending and receiving areas as part of the internal dynamics of the world-capitalist system. In this system, capitalism penetrates every part of the globe and transforms non-capitalist areas and subjugates them to the logic of capitalism. Thus waged labour in the world-capitalist system is characterized by the movement of some large scale industries from the core to the periphery areas.

According to the historical-structuralists, the role of migrant labour in the industrialized areas is a continuation of the exploitation of colonized countries by the capitalist ones. Portes and Walton (1981) argue that the maintenance of profits is possible because the countries that were economically exploited were also politically dominated. Neo-Marxist scholars maintain that modern international migration between the non-capitalist areas and the capitalist ones have the same role of generating profits. The core countries continue to be dependent upon their ability to exploit the non-capitalist ones, so that the cost of labour is reduced and profits are maintained. The uneven development between various regions is seen, according to this perspective, not as resulting from disparities in the natural resources of these regions, but because of the structural tendency of capital to make profits (French, 1986). Migrants are being treated as commodities. Import and export of migrants became increasingly an industry supported by official policies in many exploiting countries, such as the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh. Governments,

as well as private agencies, attempt to sell their labour at rates which are competitive with other labour sending countries (Keely, 1973; Nagi, 1986).

The capitalist countries, on the other hand, need labour forces which are not only productive and cheap, but also easy to be disposed of in time of economic recession. Migrant labourers from the non-capitalist countries fulfil these needs, because they are young, healthy, accept lower wages and longer working hours, than the indigenous workers, consume fewer welfare and social services and can be disposed of by repatriation if for one reason or another they are not required (Castells, 1975; Freeman, 1978). Such processes have been made possible because the migrants are powerless and vulnerable. They have very few legal and political rights in the receiving countries. They are economically and socially segregated from the native working class. They are concentrated in occupations which are labelled as dirty, unsafe, underpaid and, therefore, unacceptable to the native workers. They live in the worst residential areas in houses often rejected by the indigenous population (Castells, 1975; Freeman, 1978; Burawoy, 1981). Moreover, because migrants in the capitalist societies are concentrated in the manual, unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, they occupy the lowest occupational and social position in the stratification system.

Neo-Marxist studies have devoted much attention to the migrants' position within the class structure of the

receiving countries. Several points of view have been developed. One point of view asserts that because migrants accept low wages, they worsen the economic security of the native working class. Other points of view see the migrants as new working class, which help the indigenous working class to move upward and become embourgeoised. Yet another view looks at migrants as an agent deliberately and successfully used to split the working classes.

Castles and Kosack (1973) assert that immigrant workers and native workers are working class because of their relationship to the means of production. However, because the migrant workers occupy low economic and social positions, they have been separated from the indigenous working class. Other authors introduce the concept of race in the analysis and argue that the inferior economic and social positions of the immigrants enhance the racial prejudice against them and force them to maintain the separation between them and the indigenous working class (Castles and Kosack, 1973; Sassen-Koob, 1980).

Several authors view the powerlessness of the migrants as a deliberate strategy of state control. It is this powerlessness and vulnerability of the migrants which determines their inferior position and concentrates them into the "dirty", "unsafe" and low paying occupations, which are rejected by the indigenous working class. In this way, Oppenheimer (1974) and Freeman (1978) argue that two separated categories have been created. The first is the

indigenous white, mobile, skilled worker and the second is the migrant, coloured, static, unskilled worker. Hence migrants form a new working class or sub-proletariat (Freeman, 1978).

According to this perspective, migrant workers have a significant socio-political function for capitalism. They are deliberately used to divide the working class into various segments. The separation between the migrant workers and the indigenous workers is further increased by the dominant ideology in the host countries, which encourages racism. In this way the potential unity of the working class is undermined and its struggles are weakened (Oppenheimer, 1974; Castles and Kosack, 1973; Castells, 1975; Freeman, 1978; Sassen-Koob, 1980).

The historical structural perspective has been criticized by several authors. Cohen (1980)⁽¹⁰⁾ has claimed that a continuing flow of migrant labour is no longer a structural necessity for late capitalist societies, partly because migrant labour has become more expensive in terms of wages as well as in terms of social reproduction. The rising costs of migrant labour in some capitalist societies make them no longer politically and economically viable. Structural models fail to explain why this can happen.

What in our current structural characterization of the political-economic position (locations) of immigrant workers accounts for this new condition? (Bach and Schraml, 1982:326).

Wood (1982) argues that because the analysis of the historical-structural perspective is based on the concept of class, it fails to incorporate into its explanation the various levels of analysis that must be considered when changes in production and in migration behaviour occur. He asserts that the effects of production system upon migration behaviour cannot be analyzed because there is no conceptual link between them.

There is a conceptual discontinuity between the units of analysis (systems of production and the associated classes) and that which is being explained (the movement of people) (Wood, 1982:307)

Moreover, because historical structuralists do not include in their analysis the factors which motivate individuals to migrate and fail to conceptualize the nature of decision making process, it becomes difficult for their analysis to explain how systems of production affect the mobility or non-mobility of the people.

Other authors argue that the historical-structural approach to migration is seldom supported by empirical investigations and therefore:

The result has been a proliferation of work where the central assumptions of these schools are offered as an article of faith (Papademetriou, 1983:476).

The suggestion that there is a relationship between concepts that cannot be measured has created a divergence between the Marxist and the neoclassical schools of thought.

The former approach rejects the data produced by the latter school of thought and regards it as unimportant. The neoclassical perspective criticizes the Marxist school for their 'armchair theorizing'. The new classical writers analyze migration behaviour within a market context focusing upon individual migrants' behaviour. Structuralists analyze migration behaviour within a global political and economic system in an attempt to identify the forces which determine migration behaviour (Bach and Schraml, 1982; French, 1986).

There is no doubt that the Historical Structural analysis and explanations provide valuable insights for our understanding of the complexity of the migration phenomenon. However, in the search for some comprehensive understanding of the migration process, one should not ignore the relationship between migrants and their communities on the one hand and their cultural, socio-economic and political environments on the other.

4.3. Socio-Economic Disequilibrium

The earliest explanation of migration in terms of economic disequilibrium was probably put forward by Mill (1909) who argued that migration is a way of restoring the balance between areas by easing population pressure in low-growth areas and meeting the need for labour in the high-growth areas. In this way the balance between human and capital resources is maintained. Bogue puts it this way:

Migration is a necessary element of normal population adjustment and equilibrium. By

siphoning off excess population into areas of greater opportunity, internal migration becomes a mechanism of personal adjustment for the citizen. For the nation it is a device for maintaining a social and economic balance among communities; if migration were suddenly to be stopped, only a very short time would be required for population to "pile up" in areas of rapid growth but low opportunity for earning a livelihood. Thus, migration is a process for preserving an existing system (1959:487).

Neoclassical economists view migration as a self-regulating process through which spatial differences in labour demand and supply adjust themselves. Nationally or internationally, migration occurs between under-developed and developed areas as a natural response to the problem of over-population in the under-developed areas, where employment opportunity is little and wages are low on the one hand, and labour shortage and higher wages in the developed area on the other. According to this perspective migration is a natural response to socio-economic disequilibrium and a self-adjusting process.

Motivated by higher wages and opportunities, people move from rural areas to industrial areas. This process will continue until a surplus of labour in the industrial centres occurs, and the level of wages and the probability of finding jobs decrease. Consequently, migration from rural areas to urban centres decreases (Elkan, 1960; Lee, 1966: Todaro, 1969).

This perspective often employs the concept of "dual economy" to distinguish the national economy of the Third World nations. Most of the Third World countries have dual

economic structures. On the one hand they have a huge agricultural sector which is characterized by slow-growth, over-population, shortage of cultivable land, lack of new investment, seasonal employment and high rate of under-employment. On the other hand, they have a very small industrial sector, characterized by rapid expansion, shortages of labour and relatively high wages. As a result of such economic duality, waged labour is motivated to move from the traditional, agricultural sector to the industrial one and, at the same time, technology and new investment stimulate growth in the agricultural industry. In this way both sectors grow and expand as a result of a natural redistribution of resources and capital (French, 1986:16).

Various authors have applied this model to international migration between under-developed countries and industrial, developed countries. Griffin, for example, argues:

The migration of ordinary working people to higher paid jobs abroad, whenever feasible, is in principle, a major avenue of escape from poverty and oppression (1976:353).

In its ideal form international migration results in benefits for both the sending communities and the migrant receiving countries. International trade theory assumes that two countries with unequal resource endowment, or productive capacities can enjoy a bilateral increase in economic well-being by freely exchanging capital, goods and labour. Economic benefits can come from the fact that one country

can utilize the other's capital or labour more effectively. Allowing trade and migration to move freely would increase the output available in both countries (Griffin, 1976; Martin and Richards, 1980).

Proponents of this perspective assert that migration further benefits the sending areas by reducing unemployment problems and increasing their foreign exchange through remittances sent by migrants (Griffin, 1976). Moreover, the sending community is believed to benefit from the acquisition of skills obtained by migrants and from economic, military and political relationships with the country of destination (Ling, 1984). In Rist's words:

It was a situation in which there were to be no losers. The individual migrant received training in the host country, earned good wages and could eventually return home a skilled worker ready to assist in the development of the mother country. The host country received the labour of the migrant without having to make the investment in the social infrastructure of the country (1979:207).

Studies within this perspective have sought reasons for migration in what are known as "Push" and "Pull" factors which influence the decision to migrate. Push factors include lack of sufficient or productive land, lack of alternative economic opportunities, high population growth, high unemployment and under-employment rates, poor health and educational facilities, etc. Pull factors include employment opportunities, higher wages, better health and educational facilities, political and historical ties between the sending and receiving countries, less rigid

immigration and emigration policies etc. These pull and push factors have been regarded as reflecting the socio-economic disparities between sending and receiving countries and it is these factors which determine migration behaviour.

This model focuses on the nationality of individual migrants. Its general assumption is that people move to find jobs, or better paying jobs. They respond individually and make a rational calculation of their interest in staying or migrating. When the balance of one's calculation is in favour of leaving one leaves (Schwartz, 1971; Eichenbaum, 1971; Petersen, 1977).

This perspective has been criticized for its focus on individualistic factors. "Nothing is easier than to compile lists of such "push" and "pull" factors and present them as a theory" (Portes, 1978:5). This perspective ignores the historical, political and structural factors associated with the movement of waged labour. Moreover, this approach is criticized for its inability to explain why migrants are almost always exploited in terms of occupation, wages, housing and so on, and why there is almost always conflict between the native population and the migrants. Contrary to the argument of this perspective, migration has not resulted in any improvement in the economic disparity between developed and under-developed countries (Richmond and Verma, 1978; Wood, 1982; Papademetriou, 1983). Instead of narrowing the economic disparity between the labour sending and labour receiving countries,

... migration, be it intra or international, can be regarded as both an indicator of regional disparities and as a process that further intensifies inequalities and dependency (Wood, 1982:304).

Another set of criticisms has come from anthropologists, who assert that the "push" and "pull" model cannot explain the "circulatory migration", that is why migrants return to their supposedly gloomy place of origin (Jeffrey, 1976). The maximization model concentrates on the economic factors and overlooks social and political factors which may be very important in impelling migration or encouraging migrants to return to their home country or in affecting the ways economic gains are used (Jeffrey, 1976). Engelbrktsson, shows her dissatisfaction with such model as follows:

Peasant migrants cannot be regarded as mechanically reacting only to economic stimuli, this is neither a pleasing nor a true picture of a man in his complexity (1978:15-16).

4.4. The Process of Migration and Adjustment

This perspective has been largely developed by social anthropologists, who assert that they are able to study migration not as reactors to some economic stimulus but as

... continually important elements in the social field from which they come, as well as demonstrating how such field continues to influence the behaviour of migrants long since departed (Kasdan, 1970:1).

Moving from one place to another and from one social context to another, the migrants take with them their

"composite memory of the past" (Jackson, 1969:2). To understand migrants' action and behaviour in a certain context, one has to look at the various phases in the migration process. These different phases are linked to one another. Migration behaviour is related to at least four kinds of factors, as Lee (1966) pointed out twenty-four years ago. In his "Theory of Migration", Lee identified four sets of factors influencing migration. These are:

- 1) Factors associated with place of origin.
- 2) Factors associated with place of destination.
- 3) Intervening obstacles.
- 4) Personal factors.

Every act of migration involves not less than four phases or units: a sending unit, a receiving unit, a migrating unit and the larger unit to which the others belong. Migration is a dynamic process and as such it requires that each phase in this process must be seen as a part of a larger whole (Engelbrektsson, 1978). In his study of Pakistani migrants in Britain, Dahia comments:

I found it fruitful when analysing my field material to treat the migrant community in Britain and the society of origin as part of a single system of socio-economic relationship (1972:27).

This perspective attempts to provide understanding of the way migrants decide to move, learn of job opportunities abroad, how they organize themselves in order to overcome the problems which they may encounter in moving to and while

in the new area of destination, how they locate jobs, find friends, find accommodation, how they organize their leisure time and so on. This perspective, therefore, focuses on the importance of the various social networks and places particular emphasis upon the migrants own perceptions of their experiences and situations. It is very much concerned with the group relationships and value systems which underlie the procedural nature of migration (French, 1986).

Proponents of this perspective emphasize a few factors often neglected by other approaches. These factors can be summarized as follows.

4.4.1 The Role of Kinship and Friendship Networks

The role of kin and friends is often mentioned as an important factor in the migration process. The movement from one place to another is often facilitated by relatives and friends in both the sending and receiving communities. In the sending community relatives can help financially by pooling their resources to pay the initial migration costs of a single migrant. They may provide help in terms of moral support and encouragement. They also take care of the migrants' dependents left behind and so on (Choldin, 1973; Chamratrithrong et al, 1979; Gulati, 1986; Nair, 1986). In the receiving community, relatives and friends who had migrated earlier, help the would be migrant in terms of information about the receiving community, which is often passed back, in terms of sponsorship and in terms of providing the necessary documents to enter the host country

and so on (Abu-Lughood, 1961; Graves and Graves, 1974; Melville, 1978; Tienda, 1980).

Once a migrant is in the host country, relatives' and friends' help becomes even more important and highly practical. Migrants are often met by relatives or friends upon their arrival in the host country. They are provided with accommodation and even financial assistance, at least until they find jobs and settle down (Choldin, 1973; Stromberg et al, 1974; Engelbrektsson, 1978; Desai, 1963). Moreover, relatives and friends in the country of destination may assist new arrivals to find jobs and accommodation, to get familiar with the new environment and so on (Graves and Graves, 1974).

Several authors found that although kin networks provide various services for the migrant in the receiving country, kin networks may put some constraints on the migrant and enable the family head to exercise social control on the migrant. It is through the kinship and friendship networks that the family head in the country of origin receives information about the migrant and communicates messages to him in the host community (Dahia, 1972).

There are some disagreements among these studies on the effects of kinship and friendship networks on the migrants' assimilation into the socio-economic structure of the host country. Some studies assert that kinship and friendship networks facilitate adjustment and eventual integration in

the socio-economic structure of the host country. Others argue that maintenance of ties with relatives and friends has no effect whatsoever upon socio-economic integration (Tienda, 1980). However, all of these studies agree that kinship and friendship networks have definite effects on the migrants' adjustment. At primary level, adjustment has been found to be closely related to migrants' satisfaction and to familiarity with the new environment (Goldust and Richmond, 1974). These networks function as a stabilizing structure helping migrants:

... to satisfy their basic needs, fulfil the responsibilities of their major roles and realize the value ends of the interactional system of which they are a part (Schwarzweiler and Brown, 1969:130).

Goldust and Richmond (1974) in their "Multivariate Model of Immigrant Adaptation" identify several factors upon which the continuity of social interaction depends. These include similarity in socio-economic status, level of education and migrants' length of residence. Similar findings have been found by other studies (Kemper, 1977; Al-Najjar, 1986). Migrants with similar socio-economic status tend to maintain close ties with each other. Although migrants with higher educational levels were found to be less dependent upon their ethnic networks, educational levels in general seemed to be associated with the similarity of migrants' networks (Goldust and Richmond, 1974). The migrants' length of residence in the host country was seen to be relevant in the maintenance of the social

ties between them. The longer the length of residence the less likely a migrant maintained social contact with new arrivals. Kember (1977) found that long term migrants in Mexico seldom visited newly arrived migrants. Similar findings were reported by Chamratrithrong et al. (1979), who found that at least 50 per cent of the migrants in Bangkok described their relationships with their kin as fair and about one fourth said they did not see their relatives at all.

4.4.2 Finding Employment

Several studies have indicated the importance of kinship and friendship networks in locating jobs in the host country (Engelbrektsson, 1978; Desai, 1963). Although many migrants arrange jobs prior to their arrival to the host country, with the help of a relative or a friend, who previously moved to the same destination, not all of them actually get the job (Nair, 1986a). These and other migrants who do not have jobs awaiting them usually seek help from their friends and relatives. They depend to a great extent upon internal social ties. Desai notes that one important method used by the Indian migrants in Britain to find jobs is:

Through the use of village-kin and other internal relationships. On arrival in the United Kingdom or on losing a job an immigrant makes use of his village-kin network. If sponsored (usually the case) the newcomer is helped in his search for a job not only by his sponsor but also the latter's relatives and friends. Apart from this, his own relatives and friends assist him to find a job. Those who help are usually dispersed over numbers of

towns and hence the newcomer may move from one town to another before he finds an opening (1963:78).

Migrants who have spent enough time in the host country to acquire better understanding of the language, values and attitudes of the natives, may act as "cultural brokers" or a "middlemen" between the prospective employer and the would-be employee (Desai, 1963). However, this process is not always an automatic one. Cultural brokers have their own position and reputation to protect (Graves and Graves, 1974).

By acting as cultural brokers or as middlemen, these people gain respect from their community members and raise their social positions. However, some middlemen use their experience to exploit their fellow villagers. Those who do this and do not live up to their responsibilities towards their fellow migrants lose the respect of the migrants' community (Desai, 1963)

4.4.3 Informal Meeting Places and Voluntary Associations

Other studies have shown that migrants may also use ties inside voluntary associations, or some informal meeting places, to hunt for jobs (Stromberg et al, 1974). Informal meeting places, such as tea houses, cafes and bars are often used by migrants as places for meeting each other and hunting for jobs. Some studies have indicated that migrants prefer to meet in places such as these rather than visit each other at their residence (Graves and Graves, 1974; Al-Najjar, 1983). Informal meeting places vary considerably

according to the traditions and customs of the host country on the one hand and according to the values and traditions of the migrants on the other. While Graves and Graves (1974) indicate that migrants in Britain usually meet in cafes, tea houses and bars, Jeffrey (1976) found that Pakistani Muslims in Britain do not use bars as meeting places and Al-Najjar (1983) showed that while Arab migrants in Kuwait may sometimes use tea houses and cafes to meet with each other, Asian migrants usually meet at the market place. Whatever the migrants use as informal meeting places, these provide social continuity with the home country by exchanging information from their countries. Apart from this, these places form information centres where migrants learn about and discuss the local events, meet as many fellow villagers as possible, get to know the newcomers and more importantly, hunt for employment opportunities.

Many migrants may prefer to enrol in some voluntary association rather than completely rely on informal social interaction. Voluntary associations take many forms and provide different services. Sen (1986) identified 51 different Asian voluntary organizations in Kuwait, seven of which were informal (not registered) voluntary associations.

It is not quite clear why such institutions are formed by migrants in some places and not in others. Some studies suggest that this has to do with the migrants' traditions. Migrants who traditionally solved their problems in co-operative ways in their country of origin tend to form

voluntary associations in the host countries (Kember, 1977). Other studies argue that better educated and middle class migrants are more likely to form such associations (Goldust and Richmond, 1974). However, the laws in the host society may also encourage or discourage the formation of such societies. In some cases traditions and customs in the sending community prohibit the establishment of certain associations in the host country. For example, Desai (1962) argues that while Muslim and Sikh migrants in Britain have established their mosques and temples respectively, the Hindu migrants do not have their temples because the rituals which are required in a Hindu temple are by custom forbidden to be carried out on a foreign soil.

Various studies have shown that migrants' voluntary associations differ in their goals and functions. They may serve educational, religious, economic, political or recreational purposes (Graves and Graves, 1974). The benefits of these associations are not confined to the members but in many instances are extended to other migrants who come from the same country, thus, emphasizing the unity of the migrants' community (Desai, 1963).

Religious institutions are considered by many authors to provide a sense of identity for the participant member and encourage social introduction and social integration. In many cases religious institutions are used not only for rituals but also to provide the youngsters with basic knowledge about their religion.

Some studies suggest that religious attendance tends to decrease in the urban residence, thus contributing to the anomie of the migrants (McGee, 1975). Other studies argue that religious attendance of the migrants does not always decrease but in many instances increases (Rao et al, 1974). Indeed, we hear about new Mosques being built in almost every city in the United Kingdom where there is a sizeable number of Muslim migrants.

4.4.4 Ties with Home

Several studies have demonstrated that migration does not necessarily result in breaking ties with the place of origin. Indeed, in many cases migration strengthens the migrants' ties with their home country. This is particularly true for temporary migrants.

A migrant who is focused upon resolving his status position and demonstrating his personal adequacy for his significant others, plans his goals in terms of the place to which he migrates. He is migrating to maximize his conditions and family status in the place of origin (Schreiber, 1975:268).

Dahia (1972) argues that in Britain, the Pakistani migrants feel they are just coloured labourers, who are looked upon as a problem. Therefore, they do not depend on any recognition in British society. From the migrant's point of view, the significant others are to be found in his home village where he plans to return one day and live a comfortable life surrounded by the respect of his fellow villagers.

Other studies have shown that migrants not only improved their economic status at home, but they also gained social prestige among those in the village. Caldwell (1969) found that villagers in West Africa attributed a higher status to those who had moved to cities. Similarly, Dahia (1972) argued that the economic gains which are usually demonstrated by building a huge house, raise the migrants' status not only in the village of origin, but also among his fellow villagers in the host country, through information sent to the host country regarding the economic accomplishments of a migrant.

4.4.5 Host Attitudes

Various studies of social adjustment of migrants have taken into account the attitudes of the indigenous population towards migrants. Migrant adjustment is seen to be influenced by the attitudes of the native community. Discrimination and prejudice are perceived as reflecting the host community's resistance to absorb different cultures into the wider socio-economic structure of the host society. Discrimination and prejudice may result from some conflict at international level, from economic hardship and competition between native people and migrants, and stereotyping based upon the races of the migrants and so on, all of which are believed to affect negatively the adjustment process (French, 1986). Positive attitudes by the host community are seen as positively affecting adjustment and as increasing the chances of the eventual integration of the

migrants into the host community (Graves and Graves, 1974; Desai, 1963).

However, not all migrants are subject to hostility from all native populations. In many instances, an indigenous employer may prefer to employ migrants as cheap, disposable labour. Some employers may even assign some one among their immigrant workers to recruit his fellow migrants and to avoid any conflict between indigenous workers and migrants they arrange different shifts for each group (Allen et al, 1977).

Since discrimination and prejudice in many instances are hard to detect and often self-perceived, the measurement of indigenous attitudes toward migrants is very difficult. To overcome this problem some studies rely on a few quantifiable items, such as the rate of inter-marriage between migrants and indigenous people (Smith, 1976; Blalock and Wilken, 1979). Other studies have relied upon the official policies toward migrants. Although such policies are generally linked to economic needs and historical circumstances, they do reflect the attitude of the host country towards the migrants groups (Inglis, 1976).

Nevertheless, the interpretation of such items may produce some misleading conclusions and conflicting views. For example, Smith (1976) found that the out-marriage for female Filipinos showed a large increase between 1940 and 1960 in the United States, suggesting that the group had become acceptable to the host community. However, such

conclusions are misleading. In the United Arab Emirates for instance, an observer of the inter-group marriages may find that out-marriage for Asian females (mainly Indian and Pakistanis) is quite common; however, it is next to impossible to give in marriage an indigenous female to an Asian. Does this mean that the Asian migrants have become more acceptable to the native community of the United Arab Emirates? I do not think so!

Similarly, the interpretation of official policies towards migrants may lead to conflicting views. It has been argued that migrants live in the poorest conditions in most cities because of a deliberate policy of marginalising them socially for the benefit of the indigenous community so as to discourage them and force them to leave (Johnstone, 1983). Other studies argue that such poor areas provide the migrants with a choice of low cost housing (Graves and Graves, 1974).

The approach of the process of migration and adjustment has been criticized for its concept of a homogeneous society into which migrants become integrated once they accept the host community's values (Castles and Kosack, 1973; Patterson, 1965; Allen, 1971). It is argued that this approach, like the economic disequilibrium perspective, focuses on individuals and emphasizes the ways individual migrants are able to control their destinies and act to increase their individual interests. This approach, therefore, tends to neglect the macro socio-economic and

political factors which externally affect migration. As Burawoy argues, the issue is not whether migrants adopt or not, assimilate or not; rather its an issue of forced segregation in which migrants cannot alter or change.

What is of interest is not how migrants adapt to their new environment but how structural, particularly political and legal, constraints make permanent "integration" impossible (1981:1051).

Despite these criticisms, this perspective has various advantages. It contributes a great deal to our understanding of the process of migration, and sheds light on the possibility of viewing both ends of the migration process, the home country and the receiving country, as being linked with each other. Moreover, studying different migrant groups has shown that migrants cannot be viewed as homogeneous populations. Lastly, this approach does not ignore how migrants perceive their own experience and behaviour as migrants.

From the above, non-exhaustive review, one may conclude with many other authors that there is no single explanatory theory, sociological or otherwise, general enough to take into account the entire process of emigration and immigration. The need for such a theory is widely recognized not only by sociologists, but by other behavioural scholars as well. However, some authors raise doubt about the possibility of formulating such theory in the near future (Mangalam and Schwarzweller, 1970).

Nonetheless, all of the perspectives on migration reviewed above have advantages and disadvantages. Each perspective tends to emphasize some of the aspects of migration and to dismiss other aspects as irrelevant. The macro-level approaches tend to ignore the process of migration and the role and the perceptions of the migrants as rational, active individuals. The micro-level approaches, on the other hand, tend to minimize the influence of the political, economic and class factors on migration and migrants' behaviour. Moreover, there is an increasing tendency to study migration from the point of view of a single discipline, such as demography, geography, sociology, anthropology and so on. Each of these disciplines has contributed to the study of migration, albeit partially.

These various perspectives demonstrate that the phenomenon of migration is complex and has various aspects, some of which are found within the social system and some within the cultural system, while yet others are related to the personality system. In order to get a wider understanding of this complex phenomenon and to move forward and advance in the theoretical formation in this field, we need a holistic approach (Mangalam and Schwarzweller, 1970). Engelbrektsson comments:

In the study of migration the microscopic foci and research techniques traditionally applied by social anthropologists are complementary to the methods and techniques applied by students in larger macroscopic research (1978:14)".

From this brief examination of the approaches which have been adopted in the study of migration, we can see that the issues involved are many and diverse. The present study does not claim to develop a general theory of migration. It merely attempts as broad a view as possible of the situation of the unskilled and semi-skilled Keralite migrants in Abu Dhabi. To achieve this, the study will draw on several of the preceding approaches such as the race relation and the socio-economic disequilibrium theory. We shall begin in the forthcoming chapter by examining the socio-economic and cultural background from which our migrants came.

NOTES

1. It is noteworthy to point out that unskilled and semi-skilled foreign workers in the United Arab Emirates are temporary and single because of legal restriction and not by choice from the part of the workers. They are subject to the terms of local laws which demand that all foreigners are imported on a short-term basis (two years contract). When their contract is over, they must leave the country for at least six month period before they reapply for a new contract. Moreover, a foreign worker's right of residence is tied to his work permit so that if a worker loses his work permit he immediately loses his right of residence. Unskilled and semi-skilled migrants are prevented by law from bringing their wives and children to the host country. According to the U.A.E. law, only those whose monthly earnings reach 4,000 Dirhams or more are entitled to bring their families in the host country. Since almost all of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers make a monthly earnings of less than 4,000 Dirhams, they are prevented by law from bringing their families to the host country. Thus, whenever the term temporary is used in this theses it refers not to choice but to a legal reality.
2. Since a research project is limited by the means, space and time a researcher is often faced with, very limited possibilities to build the body of data upon direct observation. Therefore, like in many other researches a substantial part of the fieldwork's data in the present study had to be built upon reconstructions based on informants' retrospection with all the methodological problems and uncertainties associated with such a procedure (see also Chapter Four).
3. Indian migrants working in the Gulf countries came mainly from seven states. These states are Kerala Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab, Goa, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu (Nair, 1986b:70).
4. A researcher doing fieldwork often has to select a research site for his study. Quite often field studies select a single site such as a factory, a school, a hospital, a village or a town. Many reasons have been given for choosing one location than another. In some field studies research locations were selected because the researcher had some contacts already established, other studies mentioned that the subjects in the selected location were willing to co-operate and yet other studies decided on one location because the condition was convenient for the researcher and so on (Burgess, 1987:59).

5. Fried, M. H. (1986) (ed.), *Readings in Anthropology: Cultural Anthropology* (2nd edn), New York, Thomas Y. Crowell, p. 136, quoted in Burgess, 1987:11.
6. Francis, R. "Observational Research", In V. Pons, (ed.), *Introduction to Social Research*, University of Hull, 1988:51. quoted in Boudebaba, 1990:38.
7. Judgement and opportunistic sampling are two forms of non-probability sampling. Researchers use judgement sampling techniques in their studies to select informants according to some specific criteria such as age , education, sex, occupation and so on, or because the informants have certain knowledge or experience which endows them with special qualifications as ideal informants for the study. The opportunistic sampling technique, on the other hand, is often used to select informants who are available and willing to co-operate with the researcher and provide him with data and information. There are some disadvantages to using such sampling technique, not the least of which is that the study cannot be replicated (Burgess, 1987:55).
8. In the race relations approach, the term "immigrants" often refers to the permanent settlement of migrants and in the British context, to the black population from the Commonwealth countries. Nonetheless, this perspective is relevant to the study of short-term and long-term temporary migrants, as more often than not, immigrants have the intention of going back to their home countries. "In essence, therefore the distinction between 'migrants' and 'immigrants' is an arbitrary one." (French, 1986:4).
9. Earlier studies, generally speaking, were predominantly with the issue of how the racial definition of race was influenced by the biological concept (see for example Banton, 1970, 1974 and 1977; Richardson and Lambert, 1985).
10. Cohen, R. "Migration, Late Capitalism and Development", Address to the Plenary Session of the Annual Conference of the Development Studies Association. University College, Swansea, Sept. Sighted in (Bach and Schraml, 1982).

CHAPTER TWO

THE BACKGROUND: KERALA

1. Introduction

Although the presence of expatriate labour from almost all over the world in the U.A.E., as well as other oil-rich Gulf countries, has been primarily a response to labour demand, this hardly explains the significant variations found in the composition of the expatriate labour in those countries. Looking at each individual labour-importing country on the one hand and individual labour-exporting country on the other, one finds situations that differ sharply from that found at the aggregate level when one examines the whole region of the Middle East or the whole area of South Asia or South East Asia as an undifferentiated whole. In Libya and Saudi Arabia, for example, migrants from various Arab countries constituted 90.5 and 93.4 per cent respectively of total labour migrants in 1975, whereas migrants from the Indian subcontinent formed only 1.7 and 4.9 per cent respectively. In contrast to this situation is the picture in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, where Arab labour migrants amounted to no more than 24.6 and 27.9 per cent of the total labour migrants whereas Asian migrants from India and Pakistan accounted for 65 and 63.2 per cent respectively (Birks and Sinclair, 1980:142). Nor does labour demand in the oil-rich countries explain why, in the U.A.E. for instance, more than 50 per cent of the Indian labour

migrants come from the single state of Kerala (Gulati, 1986:196)

Looking at the specific context of each labour receiving country and each labour importing country may thus provide some insight into the complex phenomenon of labour migration. This chapter will examine the specific context of Kerala state. Kerala State, which accounts for the great majority of Indian labour migrants to the Gulf States in general and to the U.A.E. in particular is characterized by some salient features which make it a unique region compared to the rest of India. These unique characteristics seem to have some impact on emigration from this state. In the following pages we will examine these features giving special emphasis to social, demographic and economic characteristics.

2. The Formation of the State

Kerala, "The Land of Coconuts"⁽¹⁾ is one of the smallest states in India in terms of area. It is situated in the south-western part of India between the Western Ghats with their high mountains and deep canyons in the east and the Arabian sea in the west. Its 576 kilometre length stretches from the border of the State of Karnataka on the north to that of the State of Tamil Nadu on the south.

The national congress of India envisaged an arrangement of the provinces of independent India based on linguistic divisions. Thus, when India attained its independence,

Kerala was made up of two native states, Travancore and Cochin, which were integrated to form one state in July 1949. However, seven years later in November 1956 the united Kerala was created as recommended by the States Reorganization Commission. According to the new linguistic arrangement, the Malayalam-speaking district⁽²⁾ of Malabar and Kassaragod Taluk⁽³⁾ (sub-district) were extracted from the State of Madras and added to the State of Travancore-Cochin, and the five Tamil speaking Taluks of Vilavancode, Agasteeswaram, Kalkulam and Thovala in the far south and Shencotta in the east were taken from Travancore-Cochin State and given to Madras State (Nossiter, 1982:11). Kerala now is divided into fourteen districts. These are Trivandrum, Quilon, Alleppey, Pattanamthitta, Kottayam, Idukki, Ernakulam, Trichur, Palghat, Malappuram, Kozhikode (or Calicut), Vayanad, Cannanore and Kasargod.

3. Area and Population

3.1. Population Growth

According to the theory of "demographic transition", Kerala, just like the rest of India, seems to be passing through the stage of population explosion which characterizes the second stage of demographic transition (Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985:20). The population of Kerala at the beginning of the 17th century was only three million. By 1850, this figure had risen to 4.5 million only and by 1921, the population of Kerala amounted to about 7.8 million. From 1921 on, Kerala experienced rapid

population growth. Thus, by 1961 the population of Kerala had more than doubled to reach 16.9 million, and further increased to 21.34 million in 1971. Ten years later, in 1981, the population amounted to about 25.7 million and by 1985 was estimated at 27.3 million. These figures show that in a period of 60 years only (from 1921 to 1981) the population of Kerala increased by 229 per cent; a net increase of 17.9 million persons. When compared to India as a whole, one finds that during the period between 1901 and 1981 the all-India population growth was 189.4 per cent only, whereas that of Kerala registered 302 per cent (Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985:14). The rapid growth of population in Kerala was a function of a high birth rate coupled with a low infant mortality rate and declining death rate.

Since the beginning of the seventies, however, the State of Kerala has been experiencing a declining trend in the annual growth rate of population. This is mainly due to the rapidly declining birth rate. The reasons behind the declining birth rate in Kerala are discussed elsewhere⁽⁴⁾ but, the period between 1970 and 1984 witnessed a reduction of 6.2 points in the birth rate, from 31.6 births per 1000 population to 22.4 births. The death rate also declined during this period by 3.2 points; from 9.2 deaths per 1000 population in 1970 to 6.2 in 1984. As a result, the natural growth rate of population in Kerala declined from 2.38 per cent per annum in 1970 to 1.62 per cent in 1984 (Government of Kerala, 1985:7-10).

It seems that the family planning programme which was commenced in Kerala following in the footsteps of the national policy of population planning has more than achieved its goal (a birth rate of 25 per 1000 population). Nonetheless, such a rate seems to be still high if other factors and conditions in Kerala are considered. In the light of continuing high rates of population growth in the region, the ever-lasting high population density, the ever-decreasing per capita availability of agricultural land and the continuous increase in the unemployment and underemployment rates (Government of Kerala, 1985:28 and Oommen, 1979:3-35), Kerala needs an even lower birth rate than it has already reached.

3.2. Population Density

The density of population in a region, when coupled with low economic growth, may be seen in certain cases as a strong factor pushing certain people to migrate. One of Kerala's salient features is its high population density. While the total geographical area of the State is about 38.863 square kilometers which accounts for less than 1.2 per cent of the total geographical area of India, it supports about 27.3 million people, which accounts for about 3.9 per cent of the total population of the country (Government of India, 1988:690 and Government of Kerala, 1985:7).

This imbalance between land and population has resulted in a very high density. Of all the states of India, Kerala

has the highest density of population: about 655 per square kilometre; compared to the all-India density of 216 per square kilometer. This high density has (as will be discussed later) put considerable pressure on the scarce agricultural land and inflated the numbers of the unemployed and the underemployed.

3.3. Female-Male Ratio

It is interesting to note that Kerala seems to have a larger female population than male population. Among the states of India, Kerala was the only state where the female population is greater than the male. It is suggested that this is due to the fact that in Kerala females have longer life expectancy than males (70 years for females and 66 years for males) and to the greater migration exodus of men from the state. According to the 1971 census, of the fourteen districts of Kerala, the districts of Trichur and Palghat had the highest female-male ratio; 1081 and 1056 females per 1000 males (Sankaranarayanan and Karunaaran, 1985:17).

3.4. Age Composition

The age composition of a population has significant social and economic consequences and it may also play a major part in the migration phenomenon. Younger people are more likely to migrate than older people. On the eve of the 20th century, the proportion of the population who were below 15 years of age was found to be small and slowly

increasing in the State of Kerala. However, as a result of rapid decline in the infant mortality rate coupled with continuing high birth rate, this age group of the population reached a disproportionate level. Thus, in 1961 about 15 per cent of Kerala's population were found to be below 5 years of age, 43 per cent were below 15 years and about 51 per cent were under 19 years old. Such age distribution not only increases the pressure on the services available in the state, such as education, health etc., but also inflates the unemployed and underemployed population (Nossiter, 1982:45 and Government of Kerala, 1976:83-88).

3.5. Rural and Urban Population

Like the rest of India, Kerala is overwhelmingly rural and agricultural. Kerala has not only the highest density in all India, but also the most crowded rural areas in the whole world. According to Nossiter, the average density in a small proportion of land not exceeding 10 per cent of Kerala's total geographical area was 1,385 persons per square kilometre and in the costal areas of Cochin and Travancore a population density of above 1500 persons is found in the rural areas (1982:45).

Although urbanization is accelerating in India as a whole, only a small proportion of the population lives in urban areas. In 1981, only 24 per cent of the population were urban settlers. In Kerala, the percentage of the urban population is much smaller than that of India as a whole. According to the 1971 census, only 16 per cent of Kerala's

population lived in urban areas. The urban population of Kerala lived only in a few centres. About one third of the urban population lived in three urban centres: Cochin with 439,000 inhabitants, Trivandrum the capital city of Kerala with 410,000 people and Calicut with 334,000 people (Nossiter, 1982:14).

4. Communities in Kerala

As was indicated above, Kerala was made up on a linguistic basis from three regions, each of which had experienced separate histories⁽⁵⁾. One of the consequences of this arrangement is the existence in Kerala of three major religious communities. The largest community is that of the Hindus, comprising about 60 per cent of the total population. The other 40 per cent of the population is more or less evenly divided between the other two communities: the Christians and the Muslims.

4.1. The Hindu Communities

Although the Hindu community in Kerala is larger than Muslim and Christian communities together, it does not constitute a unified group. With its more than 500 divisions and subdivisions, the Hindu community in Kerala represents one of the most complex caste systems in the Indian subcontinent. The traditional caste system in Kerala had very strict rules with conceptions of pollution that extended beyond untouchability to unapproachability. A 'Pulaya', for instance, could not approach an 'Ezhava', but

must maintain a certain distance from the Ezhava. The Ezhava, in turn, had to keep some distance from the Nair, and the Nair from the Nambudiri. Thus, every caste considered itself superior to, and therefore oppressed, the one below it and at the same time was oppressed by the one above. The structure of the caste system was so unusual that Kerala was once described as a 'lunatic asylum' (Menon, 1987:65).

This elaborate caste system has contributed to the backwardness of Kerala and limited its development. The absence of 'Vaisyas' (businessmen) left the State of Kerala without an indigenous trading community. Muslims under the leadership of Tipu Sultan had provided a significant trading and business community who had actively and positively participated in commercial activities in the State (see Muslim community below), but their commercial activities were soon put to a halt, first by the Portuguese and later by the British and their Hindu allies (Nossiter, 1982:24). Thus the business role often attributed to the Vaisyas has never been fulfilled by an indigenous community. The arena of money-lending and entrepreneurial activities has been the domain of outsiders such as the Konkanis, the Tamil Brahmins, the Gujaratis and certainly the Europeans. If the role of the Vaisyas is to be ascribed to any community it would be the Gujaratis who

... have made [a] significant contribution to the social and economic life of Kerala. The Gujarati trade in Kerala certainly had brought notable development in the economy of the

State. In the two prominent trading centres of Kerala namely Cochin and Calicut they had established their monopoly in trade, especially in exports and imports (Mohamed, 1985:viii-ix).

4.1.1. The Nambudiri Brahmins

At the top of the caste hierarchy were the Nambudiri Brahmins who, together with the Nairs, owned all the land in Kerala. Menon comments on this:

This double supremacy of castes and land wealth reinforced by the sacred injunction of Shastras and 'Smritis' kept the lower castes in subjection. The status of the lowest castes like 'pulayas' and 'pariahs' was nothing better than that of slaves even after their formal emancipation towards the latter part of 19th century, by royal edict (Menon, 1987:65).

Ownership of land was, and still is, the traditional means of wealth and power throughout India. The patrilineal and primogenital customs of the Nambudiri Brahmins discouraged any fragmentation of the property of the joint family. Individual members had no rights of partition of the family property which was the responsibility of the eldest male and therefor administered by him. The younger brothers of the Nambudiri family had no obligation whatsoever as far as property was concerned. Their responsibilities were confined to some priestly duties. The eldest son only married a Nambudiri women within his caste, whereas his younger brothers kept mistresses from the Nair cast through what was known as 'Sambandham'; a kind of concubinage. Since the Nair community is supposedly inferior to the Nambudiri and ritually polluting, the children of such concubines were not only considered Nairs, but also polluted their Nambudiri

fathers. Polygamy and the dowry system were dominant among the Nambudiris and therefore Nambudiri women who were condemned under purdah were the worst sufferers (Nossiter, 1982:26-7 and Menon, 1987:70).

The Nambudiris are very resistant to change. Although movements of reform among the Nambudiris started not later than 1908 when the 'Nambudiri Yogakshema Mahasabha' was founded by young Nambudiri men⁽⁶⁾, it was not until the 1930s that legislation to reform marriage customs and permit the dividing of joint family property was enacted in Malabar. Unlike the non-Malayali Brahmins, Nambudiri Brahmins have rarely participated in public life and political activities. It was not until the second half of the 20th century that Nambudiri Brahmins started to enrol in formal schools and colleges. Their participation in the political sphere was almost negligible. In Nossiter's words

Perhaps no caste in India has proved so resistant to change, preserving its ritual status in disregard of its material privilege (Nossiter, 1982:27).

The non-Malayali Brahmins, mainly the Tamil Brahmins, proved to be more adaptable to the modernisation taking place in Kerala State. Their quick acceptance of, and positive response to, formal education made them a dominant group in some areas of the government administration and services in the region of Travancore. Their supremacy in the civil service continued at least until the first half of the seventies. According to the report of the Backward Classes

Reservation Commission, about 10.4 percent of all the Brahmin caste had income of more than 8,000 Rupees; about six times the State average⁽⁷⁾.

4.1.2. The Nairs

Another major group in this complex caste system is the Nairs. There are some small castes ritually below the Brahmins such as the Kshatriyas and the Ambalavasis; but their numbers are very small compared to the Nairs who constitute about 15 per cent of the State's total population. Together with the Nambudiris, the Nairs formed the aristocracy class who owned the land.

The family structure of the Nairs was 'hypergamous', 'matrilineal' and 'matrilocal'. There was no religious or legal sanctity to regulate and govern marriage relations among the Nairs. Marriage was so loosely arranged that doubts have been raised as to whether marriage existed at all. In Menon's words

A husband could dismiss his wife by just stopping visiting her house and the wife could with equal facility dismiss the husband by just telling the husband not to come to her any more (Menon, 1987:69).

In the 'Tharawad' (matrilineal joint family) the 'Karanavan' (eldest male) was head of the family and controlled all of its property. He could squander the property of the tharawad as he wished. Without any regard to the junior members of the family, he often distributed the property of the joint family among his own children and his

wife, rendering the rest of the Tharawad's members reduced to penury.

An organization of this type, built round family pride and loyalty to the Karanavan, with loose marriage relations, conflicted with the State's ever-increasing modernity, and therefore had to be reorganized. In the past, the Nairs were the warrior caste, but the military role ceased to exist with the modernization of the State. The ending of the warrior role of the Nairs, the various reform movements among the other castes, the rivalry of the competing communities such as the Syrian Christians and the Ezhavas, the growth of the money economy and the impact of western modern education, combined to undermine the position of the Nair community. Thus by the beginning of the 20th century the Nairs had lost their preeminence which was based on the ascriptive rights of feudalism and the caste system.

By the early 20th century many reforming movements began to emerge demanding the abolishing of such outmoded practices and customs, the reforming of the marriage and inheritance system, the establishment of educational and welfare institutions and the promotion and protection of the Nairs' interests in the political arena. These movements culminated in 1914 with the establishment of the Nairs Service Society (NSS), the most important achievement of which was the reform of family law. According to the new law Nairs' liaisons were given legal sanctity as effective marriages, the children of such marriages were given the

right of inheritance and alienability and the Nair men and women were given the equal right of individual partition of the family property (Menon, 1987:65-75).

These reforms had their impact not only on the Nair community but on other communities as well. As the Tarawad was weakened by these social and economic changes, many properties were fragmented into small holdings which at the time of the Great Depression were divided into even smaller holdings. These holdings, by foreclosure of mortgages or sale passed to individuals from other communities; mainly Syrian Christians and to a lesser degree Ezhavas and Muslims. The destruction of the Nairs' joint family and its estates resulted in the destruction of the landed aristocracy and the collapse of the feudal structure of rural society. These processes, however, were much slower in the region of Malabar than in Travancore and Cochin regions. In Malabar region, the concentration of land in the hands of Nairs and Nambudiri Brahmins lasted until after the forties (Nossiter, 1982:29).

Although the Nairs are no longer the dominant cast, the NSS has developed into a powerful interest group, politically representing and mobilizing the great majority of the Nairs with its more than one thousand village units and an infrastructure of schools, colleges and hospitals. The superiority of the Nair community in terms of its large infrastructure put the community in the lead. Nairs continue to have disproportionate shares in education and medical

facilities and have increasingly filled administrative and civil service positions in the States of Travancore and Cochin (Jeffery, 1976:123) and later on in the whole of Kerala. Moreover, about 25 per cent of all high income households in the State are Nairs (Nossiter, 1982:29).

4.1.3. The Ezhavas

The largest single low caste in Kerala is the Ezhavas. According to the Backward Classes Reservation Commission's report (1970) the Ezhavas community constituted about 22 per cent of the total population in Kerala. Although the Ezhavas can be found throughout the State they reside in greater concentration in the coastal region and in the district of Palghat. Although the Ezhavas traditionally performed the tasks of the Sudras (servants) and were considered untouchables by the higher castes, most of them were and still are agricultural labourers. Since the beginning of the 20th century they have also been increasingly engaged in the manufacture of coconut matting and other products related to the coconut palm.

The family structure of the Ezhavas varied. In northern part of Malabar region the Ezhavas⁽⁸⁾ were matrilineal but patrilocal, whereas those in southern Malabar were patrilineal and their property was partible. In Travancore region they were generally matrilineal and matrilocal but some patrilocal families were found and a mixed system of inheritance was practiced (Nossiter, 1982:30). Nonetheless,

with the absence of the 'tarawad' system which was prevalent among the Nairs, the Ezhavas' reform was relatively faster.

As a low and untouchable caste, the Ezhavas were so oppressed that

There was the peculiar custom of the Pulaya or Ezhava making loud noises while walking along public roads so that if any high caste person was approaching he could know and then the lower caste man had to run away from the road and keep himself at a safe distance (Menon, 1987:65).

They were forbidden from coming near the temples, let alone entering one. Unlike the Nambudiri Brahmins and Nairs, the Ezhavas, as an oppressed low caste, had nothing to lose by the economic and social changes that was taking place in Kerala. On the contrary they had much to gain. The Ezhavas were probably one of the first castes in Kerala to accept Western education and show strong desire for it well before the end of the 19th century, whereas other castes were reluctant to accept it, while the Muslims boycotted it and considered Western Education as blasphemy (see Muslim community below).

The Ezhavas were probably the first caste in Kerala to struggle against the injustice of the caste system. By the 1880s, a small group of well-off and educated Ezhavas began to make noises demanding changes in the prevailing social system and an end to their oppression and caste disabilities. After a series of campaigns and petitions they achieved only very little of what they had set for. It was not until 1903 that the first Ezhava caste association was

established under the name 'Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam' (SNDP) to remove the community's disabilities and to promote religious and secular education among the Ezhavas (Menon, 1987:67). Many educated people, not only from the Ezhavas but from all communities, began to join this association, attracted by the association's ideas of equality, castelessness, one religion and one God. Thus by 1974 the SNDP membership numbered about 60,000 person or about twice the total membership of the two major communist parties combined; the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (Nossiter, 1982:30).

Although the SNDP accomplished a great deal as far as the abolition of untouchability and the opening up of government services were concerned, it did not succeed in improving the material position of the Ezhavas. Even the partition of landed properties in the twenties did not help improve the enduring poverty among the Ezhavas. The great majority of the beneficiaries of the partitioned land (60 per cent) received very small plots of one acre or less, whereas those who received two acres or more constituted two per cent only. By 1968 only slightly over one per cent of Ezhava households earned an annual income of more than 8,000 Rupees. The impact of the Great Depression on the coir industry even worsened the economic position of the Ezhavas. Meanwhile, many militant and revolutionary political organizations had emerged, some of which fought against the conservative elements in the SNDP to carry it leftwards. These events weakened the SNDP which began to lose members

to the communist movement. The SNDP leaders continued to favour the Congress party until 1972 when they formed their own Social Revolutionary Party (SRP). Thus the Ezhava community has been politically divided among various parties.

4.1.4. The Scheduled Castes and Tribes

A few other small castes also exist in Kerala. These are known as the scheduled castes and tribes (previously known as the untouchables). They form about 10.7 percent of the total population; 1.2 per cent are Christian converts, 1.5 per cent are scheduled tribes and 8 per cent are Hindu scheduled castes. Although slavery was abolished in the 1850s and social change and legislative enactment has done a great deal to reduce overt caste disabilities, covert disabilities and discrimination have continued and according to the Backward Classes Reservation Commission, many examples of discrimination against those castes were recorded. The scheduled castes and tribes remain predominantly landless labourers who perform the most difficult agricultural tasks (Nossiter, 1982:32-3).

4.2. The Muslim Community

The Muslim community or, as they are called in Kerala, the Moplahs, was generated through trading contacts with the Muslim Arabs who carried out commercial activities between the region known as the Malabar coast and the Arab settlements along the western coast of the Arabian Gulf and

the Arabian Sea. In the 8th century Islam rapidly spread on the Malabar coast and the Muslim community has grown by conversion as well as natural increase. Now, the Muslim community constitutes about 20 to 25 per cent of the total population in Kerala. Although Muslims can be found throughout Kerala, the great majority of them are found in the Malabar region, where they form more than 40 per cent of the population in southern areas and more than 15 per cent throughout Malabar. In the region of Travancore and Cochin their proportion drops to 5 per cent or less (Nossiter, 1982:23-4).

After the Arab merchants reached Malabar in the 8th century, trade and commerce were a Muslim monopoly. The absence of 'Vaisyas' (businessmen) left the Muslims with no competitors as far as trading and commerce was concerned and they became the only indigenous trading community in the Malabar coast. However, with the arrival of the Portuguese by the end of the fifteenth century Muslims lost their commercial superiority. Although Muslims fought long against the foreign intrusion of the Portuguese which threatened their trade monopoly (Kareem, 1986:81-2), eventually had to withdraw inland in search of alternatives to trade, as the Portuguese had utterly destroyed their commercial activities by the second half of the 16th century. Thus, by 1750 the great majority of the Muslim community became poor fishermen or petty traders. The once well-established community became by the end of the first half of the eighteenth century one of the poorest communities in Kerala (Miller, 1976:82).

The situation of the Muslim community soon changed, however, with the invasion of Malabar region in May 1766 by the Mysorean Muslims under the leadership of Haider Ali and later his son, Tipu Sultan. Tipu Sultan established strong trading links with the Arabs along the Gulf coast, sent missions and ambassadors to these countries and established factories and warehouses in almost every country in the area⁽⁹⁾. During Tipu Sultan's reign, trade relations between Kerala and the Arab countries increased enormously and the Muslim community once again dominated trade activities and became stronger than ever. The Muslim supremacy, however, did not last for a long time. The British and their allies, the princely Hindu confederacy, gained victory over the Muslim Moplahs in 1792 and put the Muslims once more into economic and cultural subjugation (Kareem, 1973:233)⁽¹⁰⁾.

The condition of the Muslim community was so bad that the whole community burst into what was known as the 'Moplah Outrage'. Serious rebellion continued throughout the period between 1836 and 1919. All sorts of repressive measures were taken by the British to oppress the outrage of the Moplahs, but all of these measures only exacerbated the situation, and the outrage culminated in what was known as the 'Moplah Rebellion' in 1921-1922. The rebels' aims were to get rid of the British authority in the southern interior of Malabar and to establish a 'Kilaphat' government. Thousands of the Moplahs were killed, imprisoned and exiled to the Andaman Islands (Kareem, 1986:82-3). This stubborn resistance, continuous struggle and uncompromising hostility towards the

English deprived the region of Malabar of any opportunity of modernization and development. Malabar became a neglected area on which the British spent little beyond the necessary requirements of law and order.

In addition to the Moplahs in Malabar, there are other Muslim groupings in Kerala. The first group are the Muslims of Cannanore in the north. Those are economically better off as they are proprietors of land and are characterized by their matrilineal family system inherited from their Hindu Nair origins. The second group are those of Travancore and Cochin. Having escaped the worst attention of the Portuguese and the British, these are a prosperous community engaged in trading and business who are less resistant to modernity and Western education than other Muslim communities (Miller, 1976:221-252).

Nonetheless, the Muslim Community in general was and still is the most backward community in Kerala. Its backwardness seems to be a direct consequence of its attitude toward modern education. Orthodox religious leaders adopted a policy of total indifference toward the Western education introduced by the British. Some leaders went so far as to regard English education as blasphemy. Thus,

They [Muslims] kept out of schools and colleges established by the British and boycotted their military and civil services. As a result of this prolonged and protracted resistance against an established government for nearly a century and a half, the community fell into the abyss of misery and illiteracy from which they have not yet fully emerged (Kareem, 1973:234).

Politically, Muslims of Kerala have been more unanimous than any other community. They have supported the Muslim League ever since India gained independence. Muslims generally voted for the Congress except for a small proportion estimated at 20 per cent who supported communist parties. These are mainly found in the northern part of Malabar.

4.3. The Christian Community

Tradition says that Christianity in Kerala goes back to St. Thomas the Apostle, who converted Hindus in 52 A.D.. Historians, however, agree that Christians have lived in Kerala since the fourth century as a result of the efforts of Christian immigrants from East Asia who were able to convert a large number of the Keralite Hindus to Christianity⁽¹¹⁾. Christians in Kerala form about 20 per cent of the total population, but they do not constitute a homogeneous community. Unlike the Muslims, the Christians in Kerala have caste-like distinctions between the different groups. Although not as strict and rigid as the Hindu caste system, Christian groups in Kerala are hierarchically organized and endogamy is practiced among them. A few words about the various Christian groups are in order.

4.3.1. The Syrian Christians

The largest group among the Christians are the Syrians (so called because they follow liturgies and traditions derived from eastern orthodox missionaries). In the

fifteenth century their numbers were estimated at 200,000. Today they form about 75 per cent of the Christian population or about 16 per cent of the total population of Kerala. They are found in great numbers in the southern part of Cochin and in the central and northern part of Travancore (Nossiter, 1982:21).

Like all other communities in Kerala, Syrian Christians practice endogamy and consider marriage between different groups of the Christians as morally wrong, and although the dowry system is illegal they still, like most Keralites, practice it. Their family system is a patrilineal one. Hierarchically, the Syrian Christians stand above the other Christian groups. They have a status similar to that of the high-caste Hindus (Miller, 1976:28).

Apart from the Brahmins, the Syrian Christians are the most prosperous community in Kerala. They have the highest annual income per family. In 1968 it was estimated that 3.1 per cent of the Syrian households had a yearly income of more than 8,000 Rupees, whereas only 1.6 per cent of all Kerala's households fell into this category. They constituted about 30 per cent of all high income households in the State (Nossiter, 1982:22).

As was mentioned earlier, the role of the Vasiya has been partially fulfilled by the Syrian Christians. They were engaged in plantation agriculture and in most business activities and banking. Their supremacy in education secured

for them a large share of positions in the government services.

The concentration of the Syrian Christians in three main areas enabled them to create assembly constituencies which provided them with great political influence. Politically, since independence the Syrians, like the other Christian groups, have been voting Congress. It was not until 1964 when the Kerala Provincial Congress Party split that the Syrian political influence was divided between two parties, the Congress and Kerala Congress (Nossiter, 1982:195).

4.3.2. The Latin Catholics

The Latin Catholics constitute the second largest section within the Christian community in Kerala. They originated from conversion among the lower castes living in the coastal areas during the Portuguese occupation which lasted from 1492 to 1665. Nowadays, Latin Catholics are estimated at 3.6 per cent of the population.

Like the Muslims and the Ezhavas, the Latin Catholics are socially and economically a backward group. According to the Backward Classes Commission, 1.6 per cent only of the Latin Catholics' households earned an annual income of more than 8,000 Rupees. Like the Syrian Christians, the Latin Catholics have been active opponents of communism and strong supporters of Congress.

4.3.3. Other Christian Groups

In addition to the Syrians and Latin Catholics there are other Christian groups such as the Roman Catholics, the Protestants and the Evangelists. The numbers of each group are not available but all together form 1.5 per cent of the total population. They are mainly converts from the Scheduled Castes of the southern part of Travancore where Protestant, Evangelical and Roman Catholic missions have been very active.

5. The Economy of Kerala

Kerala's economy depends heavily on agriculture, which not only provides the state with the basic food items and contributes the largest share to the domestic product (Government of Kerala, 1985:9) but also employs about 55 per cent of the working population of Kerala (Nossiter, 1982:303) and provides the state with the raw materials required for various industries, such as the coconut husks for the coir industry. Moreover, agriculture in Kerala brings foreign exchange which is used to import machinery, technology and other inputs necessary for industrialization. It also provides the market for some locally produced industrial products such as fertilizer and farming machinery (Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985:43). Despite its importance to the economy, the development of the agricultural sector in Kerala has been far less than satisfactory. In the following few pages an attempt will be made to give a general idea of, first, the agricultural

sector of Kerala's economy and second, the industrial sector. Then we shall relate all of this to poverty and unemployment problems in Kerala.

5.1. The Agricultural Sector

The agricultural sector of Kerala is characterized by some distinctive features compared to other parts of India. First, Kerala surpasses all other states of India in respect of the high pressure of population on land. Second, because of the large number of cash crops, the agricultural sector is more commercialized than in any other state in India. Third, the production of food items has always been far less than Kerala's requirements (Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985:43).

5.1.1. Demographic Pressure

Among the important factors affecting agricultural development in Kerala is the high pressure of population on land. The rapid population growth which Kerala has experienced during the last few decades coupled with limited cultivable land has put the state of Kerala in a difficult position. The demographic pressure on land becomes more apparent when only the net area sown is considered. Of the total geographical area of Kerala only 46.6 per cent was sown in 1953. Due to the availability of arable land, the sown area increased by 20.4 per cent by 1971 to reach 56.10 per cent of the total geographical area (Government of Kerala, 1980:33). The limited availability of arable land in

the state made the bringing of more land under crop impossible. Thus, the extensive phase of agricultural growth in Kerala has been practically over since 1971. This can be seen from the fact that in 1984, the net area sown was still the same as that in 1971 (56.11 per cent) (Government of Kerala, 1985:35). This high pressure of population on land resulted in an ever decreasing per capita availability of cultivable land which by 1974 was 0.27 acre only (Nossiter, 1982:35) and, since no more land has been added to the sown area, the cultivable land per capita is most likely less than this.

5.1.2. Physical Features

Another important factor affecting agricultural development in Kerala is the extreme variations in the physiography of the state. Kerala's geographical territory can be divided into three natural regions, viz., the lowland, the midland and the highland. The lowland lies on the western part of Kerala along the Arabian Sea. This region is rich and fertile with extensive paddy lands and coconut plantations which provide the main agricultural crops. The presence of backwaters in this region (unique to Kerala) gave rise to the early development of the coir industry in the state, as they provide natural facilities for soaking the coconut husks that are abundantly available in Kerala.

In between the lowland and the highland lies the midland. This is the most fertile region in Kerala and the

people of this region are engaged mainly in agriculture. The main crops are banana, coconut, sugar cane, tapioca, pepper and paddy, which is mainly cultivated in the valleys.

The highland is formed from the mountains known as the Western Ghats which run along the eastern border of the state. This region is rich with dense forests in the upper parts where teak, rosewood and other valuable trees are found in large quantities. Tea, coffee, rubber and cardamom form the main plantation crops in the lower parts of the highland.

The proximity of the Arabian Sea to the high mountains of the Western Ghats results in heavy rainfall. Kerala is exposed to the southwest and northeast monsoons which provide the state with rain through out the year. The nature of the land and the heavy rainfall provides Kerala with 41 rivers, some of which are as long as 228 kilometres. The total length of these rivers is about 3,025 kilometres (Iyer, 1975:6-7). Although rainfall is very important to the economy of Kerala, excessive rainfall causes huge destruction to crops and dwelling places and causes a decline in the mineral content of the soil, reducing its fertility. In the summer, however, many of the rivers dry up and saline water flows from the backwaters into the lower reaches of many rivers, causing great damage to crops and shortage of drinking water for the people of the lowland region.

5.1.3. Land-use Pattern

This extreme variation in the physiography of the state of Kerala has its effect on the land-use pattern. The net area sown in 1983-84 formed 56.11 per cent of the total geographical area and the area sown more than once formed 17.54 per cent. The proportion of the fallow lands was 1.82 per cent whereas barren and uncultivable lands stood at 2.23 per cent. The land under permanent pasture and grazing formed 0.13 per cent and cultivable waste land constituted 3.32 per cent. The area under forests covered about 27.83 per cent and the area in non-agricultural use formed 17.15 per cent (Government of Kerala, 1985:35).

5.1.4. Agricultural Performance

Although the agricultural contribution to the state's domestic product has been declining since 1970-71, agriculture still contributes the biggest share to the state domestic product. The contribution of the primary sector to the domestic product was as high as 49.3 per cent in 1970-71 but during 1983-84 its share declined to 40.5 per cent (Government of Kerala, 1985:9).

Intensification of agriculture seemed to be the only way to increase productivity. Looking at the trends in intensive cultivation, one finds that only during the period from 1965-66 to 1975-76 has there been a substantial addition to the area sown more than once. During this period the area sown more than once increased by slightly less than

63 per cent from 487,000 hectares in 1965-66 to 792,000 hectares in 1975-76. After this date, however, there has been a decline in the area sown more than once. By 1984 it declined to about 681,000 hectares, recording a net decrease of about 14 per cent (Government of Kerala, 1985:35).

Although during the period from 1956 to 1972 the cultivated area increased by slightly less than 32 per cent, the productivity increased by about 12 per cent only. Moreover, the increase in productivity was the highest (about 95 per cent) in the plantation sector and was the lowest (about 36 per cent) in the food sector (Nossiter, 1982:303). Similarly, the increase in the area under cash crops was far more significant than the improvement in productivity and some cash crops such as coconut, pepper and cashews showed a striking decline in the yield. This trend continued through 1979-80 when some major cash crops' productivity recorded a significant decline and the productivity of some other crops went down to a level lower than that reported in 1952-53 (Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985:53-7).

Like all other states in India, Kerala depends to a great extent for its development on central allocations in the form of investment and assistance. The politicians in Kerala have been arguing that Kerala has never received an equitable share of the central allocations and that no account has been taken of its population, which forms about 3.9 per cent of the all-India population, or its

contribution to India's foreign exchange earnings, or even its backwardness. In Nossiter's words

Kerala has been among the most vociferous in alleging politically motivated discrimination in the distribution of Central resources for plan expenditure (Nossiter, 1982:265).

In an interview conducted by the researcher in February 1989 with Kerala's Chief Minister Mr. E. K. Nayanar at his office in Trivandrum and with the Labour Minister Mr. K. Pankajakshan at his residence, they expressed similar opinions as far as the distribution of central resources was concerned.

However, the underdevelopment of the agricultural sector in Kerala is also a result of the policies of the respective administrations in the state. The state government has been unable to develop the agricultural sector and its efforts to stimulate growth have been limited compared to that of other states of India. According to Nossiter,

... the powers of state-level governments to stimulate growth are limited but it is indisputable that the record of Kerala ministries prior to 1970 compared poorly with other states (Nossiter, 1982:303).

Expenditure on agriculture accounted for only 9 per cent of Kerala's total development expenditure in 1968-69 (the lowest in India) and the development of irrigation accounted for 3 per cent only in the same year (Nossiter, 1982:303-305). Some efforts were made under the United Front

ministry in the form of significant increases in the land under rice, the distribution of new high-yielding seeds which resulted in an increase in the paddy yield per hectare during the period from 1966 to 1971, the conversion of single crop land to double crop land and increases in the production and consumption of fertilizer (Government of Kerala, 1976:108). However, the weakness of and corruption in the administration apparatus were apparent in many agricultural schemes.

The agricultural department, for instance, implemented a scheme to cultivate a new variety of rice on slightly less than one million acres on the basis of one season's experiment on one acre of land in one place in the state. The scheme failed and was abandoned after three years as the variety of the rice proved to be unpopular to both the farmers and the consumers. Another example was the State Cashew Development Corporation's acquisition of the right to collect the yield of cashews from 5,000 acres of state owned plantations. The result was disastrous; the SCDC reported a loss of more than 71 per cent, whereas the private companies were making a profit (Nossiter, 1982:305).

In the 1970s, the government of Kerala under the Menon ministries increased the efforts to develop the agricultural sector. More efforts were made to adapt new technological ideas to suit the local agronomic conditions and the Agricultural University was established in 1971 (Government of Kerala, 1976:32). Moreover, due to the predominance of

small-holding, the government encouraged the creation of co-operative schemes between small farmers and implemented the Small Farmer Development Programme (Government of Kerala, 1976:26). Despite these efforts, however, the returns were very limited and in many instances yields declined and the collective farming societies did not work well (Jayachandran, 1976:63).

5.1.5. Food Supply

Food production in Kerala has been affected by a combination of demographic pressure and the steady shift from food crops to cash crops in the forms of valuable gardens and plantations. The extension of cash crops took place first in previously arable areas of the highlands region where the basic food crops such as paddy and pulses could not be grown. Later on, however, the tempting prices of cash crops and the limited irrigation facilities for food crops encouraged the extension of cash crops in the lowlands.

In the period between 1955-56 and 1970-71, the area under paddy increased by 15 per cent only, whereas that under rubber went up by 177 per cent, the area under coffee went up by 120 per cent, the area under cashews increased by 174 per cent and that under coconut went up by 60 per cent (Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985:48-9). In the late 1950s Kerala was producing slightly over half of its rice consumption and the balance was brought from other states in India. In the 1960s, however, rice became a luxury item and

its per capita availability declined sharply due to the post-independence restriction on the interstate movement of rice. By 1978, rice production in Kerala had fallen to little more than two fifths of the state consumption and at times when the monsoons failed, rice was unobtainable. Food shortage has been a major problem in Kerala and an important issue in the elections at least until 1977 (Nossiter, 1982:52-4). Studies showed that Kerala was among the poorest places in the world when poverty was measured by undernourishment (Centre for Development Studies, 1977:7).

5.2. The Industrial Sector

The imbalance between land and population is probably one of the most, if not the most important factor lying at the root of Kerala's many economic problems such as the ever-increasing unemployment and chronic poverty. The various land reform acts implemented in the state to lessen the inequality of land holding and the serious efforts by the government to improve the quality and quantity of the social services have proven insufficient to lessen the persistent poverty or to reduce the ever-mounting unemployment (see poverty and unemployment in Kerala, below). These efforts have to be supplemented by rapid industrialization. Nonetheless, while the neighbouring states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have made steady progress in the field of industrialization Kerala has remained industrially backward (Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985:153).

The industrial sector in Kerala is highly influenced by the agricultural sector. Agricultural raw materials have dominated the industrial structure of Kerala which has offered employment opportunities to thousands of people. The coir industry, for instance, provides employment for nearly 1.4 million people in the densely populated coastal belt. It was estimated that about 450,000 workers were directly involved in coir manufacturing in the mid-1970s and about one million were indirectly engaged in this industry (Nossiter, 1982:58). Those, however, were mostly from the backward classes and weaker sections of the society (Government of Kerala, 1985:48). Although the coir industry is one of the lowest-paying industries, working conditions are not pleasant and the workers suffer from occupational disease, it employs a larger number of workers in its different sectors (12) than any other cottage industry (Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985:193). Due to the difficulty of getting an adequate quantity of coconut husks and continuous decline in the demand for coir production (export of coir and coir goods declined from 78,268 tonnes in 1962-63 to 28,609 tonnes in 1980-81 (Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985:203) the coir industry remained stagnant and the number of those engaged in the various sectors of the industry continues to fall.

In 1977, average daily employment in the registered factories in Kerala was 286,000, of whom about 47 per cent were engaged in cashew processing. Apart from cashew processing, only cotton textiles, tiles, plywood and

chemicals industries were employing more than 10,000 workers daily. Of all the registered factories in Kerala, only twelve per cent were based on non-agricultural or forest products such as the fish-canning and freezing industry centered in Quilon district. In 1977 nearly all of the non-agricultural based industries such as the chemical and manufacturing industries were found in the public sector. Of these industries, only two employed more than 2,000 workers; these were the Fertilizers and Chemicals Travancore Ltd. which employed 7,000 workers and Hindustan Machine Tools which employed 2,500 people (Government of Kerala, 1978:127). The situation does not seem to have improved significantly since 1977. By 1984-85 there was an average daily employment of 287,713 workers only employed in 10,656 registered factories. About 22 per cent only of the total employment were engaged in factories based on non-agricultural products (Government of Kerala, 1985:129).

Many reasons have been given to account for the industrial backwardness in Kerala. First, politicians were more interested in the construction of a street or school in their constituency to satisfy their electors than to think of planning a rational industrial policy. Thus, successive state five year plans accorded a low priority to industrial development. In the first, second, third and fourth five years plans, only 2, 8, 8, and 7 per cent respectively of the total expenditure were allocated for industrial development, whereas social services (education, health,

housing, etc.) accounted for 15, 25, 23 and 22 per cent respectively (Nossiter, 1982:280). In Nossiter's words:

No ministry had ... been able to resist the social-political pressures for improved social services, particularly education (1982:284).

Although, according to some economists (Streeten et al., 1981:96-192) investment in basic human productivity is very important before embarking on ambitious industrial development, the expenditure allocated for social services, such as mass primary education, seems to have been disproportionally larger than that allocated for agriculture and industry. Educational improvement alone may not have positive implications for development (Todaro, 1985:325-357). Moreover, in many instances the services provided were not necessarily needed and at times were wasteful. Some of these wasteful services were the "construction of a bridge over a canal that was itself cancelled, and ... another bridge without a road to cross it"(Nossiter, 1982:281).

Another reason often given by politicians to account for Kerala's backwardness in the industrial sphere is that Kerala does not receive an equitable share in the distribution of central allocations on the one hand⁽¹³⁾ and, on the other hand, Kerala's own taxation system has been unable to generate sufficient funds to support large scale industrial development⁽¹⁴⁾.

In an interview conducted by the researcher with the Chief Minister of Kerala Mr. E. K. Nayanar in Trivandrum

during the field work, the latter expressed the view that the problem lies in the absence of private investment, as businessmen and investors refrain from starting ventures in Kerala. This is probably correct. There were only three private companies operating in Kerala in 1970 which had capital of more than 10 million Rupees (Nossiter, 1982:270). Several interpretations are given to account for this limited private investment in the state of Kerala, such as the lack in Kerala of a tradition of industrial enterprise, the relative lack of entrepreneurial talent and the political instability of the state. The most important reason, however, seems to be the "unique Malayali trade union" which is always mixed with political motives; almost every political party in Kerala has its own trade union in every industrial and business enterprise (Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985:155). According to three Legislative Assembly Members and two professors, the retarded pace of private investment and industrial growth in Kerala is a consequence of the practices of the self-styled politicians who have been using the workers for their own selfish interests. Strikes in Kerala has been more or less a daily activity. No investor is willing to invest a large sum of money in a place where the economic and political atmosphere is highly discouraging⁽¹⁵⁾. Mr. Tata, a famous industrialist commented that even Keralites themselves were hesitant to invest in Kerala because of its poor image on the labour front (Indian Express, May 12, 1981). Not only has Kerala been unable to attract investors from outside the state but

it has also been unable to keep the already existing industries such as handloom, coir, and cashew processing which began to move to the neighbouring states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu (Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985:155).

5.3. Other Aspect of the Economy (Education)

In spite of the meagre resources of the state, Kerala has reached an outstanding level in terms of education as indicated by parameters like literacy rate, enrolment ratio, per capita expenditure on education etc. As far as literacy is concerned Kerala stands in the forefront of all other states of India. In 1971 the literacy rate was 60 per cent, twice the national average (Government of Kerala, 1978:148) and in 1981 literacy rate had reached 70 per cent compared with 36 per cent for all India (Nair, 1986:8).

Kerala's investment in the field of education formed 7 per cent of the state income, whereas at all-India level, only 3 per cent of the national income was invested in education in 1978 (Government of Kerala, 1978:91). The Government expenditure on education, which was 185.5 million Rupees in 1960-61, has increased to 3,450 million Rupees in 1984-85, recording a more than eighteen fold increase over a period of twenty-three years. (Government of Kerala, 1978:91 and 1985:4). Of the total expenditure, primary education accounted for 52 per cent, secondary education 29 per cent, University and other higher education for 13 per cent, technical education 4 per cent and others including special education 2 per cent (Government of Kerala, 1985:4).

The greater financial allocation in favour of primary education was a result of the policy followed in the State of encouraging primary education. The results of such a policy have been not only to increase the literacy rate, but also to reduce the differences in literacy rate between males and females on the one hand and between rural and urban areas on the other (Nair, 1979:89).

In the last three decades or so Kerala has made great progress in reducing illiteracy in the State⁽¹⁶⁾. However, educational achievement in terms of number of years of schooling has not been so good. Nair, in his analysis of the role of primary education in socioeconomic change, noticed that with respect to the proportion of the students who reach Class 8, Kerala ranks the second lowest state in India. (1979:87).

One important feature of Kerala's educational system is that it is dominated by the private sector. About 62 per cent of the lower primary schools, 70 per cent of the upper primary schools, 61 per cent of the high schools and almost 79 per cent of colleges are in the private sector (Government of Kerala, 1985:162 and 165).

Another important feature of the educational field in Kerala is that, while general school education has made an outstanding progress, professional and technical education have shown little advancement. In 1961-62, Kerala had 9,659 schools, of which about 70 per cent were lower primary schools, about 21 per cent upper primary schools and

slightly less than 9 per cent high schools. In 1984-85, the number of schools reached 12,102⁽¹⁷⁾, recording an increase of more than 25 per cent (Government of Kerala, 1985:162).

The total enrolment in schools recorded a substantial rise of 55 per cent from 3,457,752 in 1961-62 to 5,353,681 in 1976-77. Starting in 1980, however, the total enrolment showed only a small rise. Thus, between 1980-81 and 1984-85 the total enrolment increased by 6 per cent only (Government of Kerala, 1985:162). This was mainly due to the huge fall in the number of students at the lower primary stage. In 1980-81, the decline in enrolment in Class I was 55,000⁽¹⁸⁾. As far as education of girls is concerned Kerala maintained its progress. The proportion of girls enrolled in all three stages of school education reached 48.7 per cent in 1984-85.

Although Kerala's expenditure on higher education and its output of graduates is above the Indian average, the existing facilities for higher education are insufficient. Until recently, there was only one university in Kerala (The University of Kerala, established 1937) serving the whole state (Nossiter, 1982:33). Even today, there are only three universities, serving a huge number of matriculates coming out from schools every year. To cope with this situation, more and more colleges have been established and a shift system has been introduced in many colleges. Thus, the number of affiliated art and science colleges under these universities has increased from 47 in 1961-62 to 117 in

1971-72 and to 168 in 1984-85 (Government of Kerala, 1985:165).

In terms of enrolment in arts and science colleges in 1984-85, there were 297,745 students enrolled in various stages. The proportion of female students increased from 49 per cent in 1979-80 to more than 50 per cent in 1984-85, indicating that Kerala maintained the tempo of progress in the field of female education (Government of Kerala, 1985:166).

Professional and technical education, however, made little progress. Until recently, Kerala had only two engineering colleges and three polytechnics. With the introduction of planning, this situation began to change. Thus, in 1984-85 there were six engineering colleges, twenty-five polytechnics, four law colleges and five medical colleges. In addition to this, there were 44 technical high schools and 253 industrial training institutes. In the early eighties, a programme for vocationalisation of education was introduced in 41 high schools and 11 technical high schools (Government of Kerala, 1985:4 and 168).

6. Inequality in Kerala

6.1. Tenure System of Kerala

As was indicated earlier, Kerala was formed out of three political units, namely the State of Travancore, the State of Cochin and the Malabar District. Due to the different historical events experienced by these three

regions, there have been significant social, political and economic differences between them. Tenurial arrangements⁽¹⁹⁾ were among the features that varied from one region to another. It is estimated that there were nearly 500 different forms of tenure in the state (Nossiter, 1982:51). Nonetheless, a system of feudal land relations with a high caste janmi (landlord) at the top supported by caste power has prevailed throughout the state of Kerala. More than one tenth of the agrarian population in Travancore region were tenants in 1951. The corresponding percentages for Cochin and Malabar regions were 28.1 and 39.3 respectively (Oommen, 1979:5). Moreover, the existence of the kanomdar (intermediaries) between tenant cultivators and landlords formed another burden on the back of the tenants. Thus, "... the agricultural labourer bore landlord, intermediary, and tenant cultivator on his back." (Nossiter, 1982:51).

6.2. Land Reform in Kerala

Several laws have been passed since independence to regulate and lessen the evils of tenancy in Kerala⁽²⁰⁾, but it was not until 1957 that the first communist government of Kerala introduced a bill along with other land reform measures in an attempt to abolish the tenancy system. This legislation (The Agrarian Relations Act), was enacted four years later (in 1961) but was not fully implemented. In 1964 it was replaced by the Land Reform Act. However, none of these attempts seem to have had a substantial effect in altering the prevalent conditions. The land reform survey

conducted two years after the implementation of the Land Reform Act estimated that 43 per cent of the total cropped area in Kerala continued to be under tenancy; nearly 45 per cent of the agrarian households of Kerala were tenants and 41 per cent only were owner cultivators (Government of Kerala, 1967:50).

The proportion of tenants, however, varied from one district to another. It was the lowest in the four districts of Trivandrum, Quilon, Alleppy and Kottayam in Travancore region and the highest in the three districts of Palghat, Kozhikode and Cannanore in the region of Malabar (see Appendix 3). As will be discussed in Chapter 3, more than 50 per cent of the migrants in the community under study have come from the region of Malabar where the consequences of tenancy have been the worst.

Variations from one district to another are even more striking when the agricultural households with no land of their own are considered. In 1967, almost one million agricultural households in Kerala were cultivators through leasing-in of lands and about 67 per cent of them were working on a small plot of land, of less than one acre. The great majority of these households (about 74 per cent), however, were located in the region of Malabar (Government of Kerala, 1967:117-172).

Land ownership in Kerala continued to be remarkably unequal. In 1967, almost 60 per cent of the land-holding households owned a plot of less than one acre. The

proportion of cultivated land owned by these household constituted 10 per cent of the total, whereas less than one per cent of the agrarian households with 20 acres or more owned about 32 per cent of the entire cultivated area (Nossiter, 1982:48). Although no separate figures are available for the proportions of land cultivated by different castes, classes or communities, there is some evidence that land ownership has remained predominantly high caste, particularly in the Malabar region and to a lesser extent in Cochin region (Gopalan, 1973:177-8).

The first serious attempt to implement all of the provisions of the Land Reforms Act was on the eve of 1970. From that date, landlordism was abolished in Kerala and all rights of the landlords were transferred to the government. According to the Land Reform (Amendment) Act, 1969, the tenants got full benefits of ownership. A tenant was entitled to purchase the right, title and interest of the landlord and pay the government the price of the land, either as a lump sum or in instalments. In cases where a tenant did not apply for assignment, the Land Tribunals initiated action (*suomotu*) and assigned the land to him (Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985:96-103). The implementation of these reform measures resulted in a considerable reduction in tenancy and a corresponding increase in ownership rights. Thus, by the end of June 1971, just eighteen months after the implementation of the act, the percentage of tenants decreased from 44.9 per cent before the implementation of the act to 8.2 per cent, while

the percentage of owners increased from 40.6 per cent to 88.4 per cent (Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985:113-5). Up to 1980 more than 2.4 million tenants and more than a quarter of a million hutment dwellers had benefited from the Land Reform Act (Oommen, 1979:9).

6.3. Social Mobility

Inequality is also found in the access to educational facilities and work opportunities. Kerala stands in the forefront of all other states of India as far as educational development is concerned and the educational facilities have expanded rapidly and reached most parts of the state. However, educational opportunities remained unequally distributed between rural and urban areas as well as among the various socio-economic groups (Nair, 1979:85-102). According to Nair, there is a direct relationship between inequalities in the distribution of educational opportunities and the inequalities in the distribution of social and economic power in Kerala. The socially and economically backward communities such as the Muslim, the Ezhavas, the Latin and Roman Catholic and other Scheduled castes and tribes had less access to educational facilities, particularly in levels higher than primary, than the Brahmins, the Nairs and the Syrian Catholics, collectively called the forward communities (Nair, 1979:78-98). Had it not been for the reservation of few seats in the educational institutions for the backward communities the forward

communities would have had taken 80 per cent or more of places in medical training (Nossiter, 1982:37).

Among the backward communities, however, the Muslim community seems to be far behind the Ezhavas and the Latin Catholic. According to a survey conducted in 1965, the number of Muslim students who reached Class 10 was 283 per thousand, as compared to 446 among Latin Catholics and 680 among Ezhavas. Moreover, in 1968-69 the total enrolment of Muslims in Class 10 was 8.29 percent of the total population. In Arts and Science degree courses the Muslims' share was 6.7 per cent only and in almost all of the professional courses the attainment of Muslims was far below that of other communities. The position of Muslim women was even worse, with about 55 per cent of them illiterate in 1968-69. The Muslim women's attainment of primary, middle and high school levels were 11.73, 3.04 and 0.65 respectively. As far as technical education is concerned, Muslims were the most backward community in Kerala. In 1968-69 almost all of the Muslims (99.52 per cent) in Kerala had no technical education. The percentage for Muslim women was 99.82. As a consequence of such backwardness, the occupational pattern of the Muslim population in Kerala continued to be trade and farm based. (Abdulkareem, 1987:79-82). Appendix 4 shows the occupational pattern of the Muslim community in Kerala in 1986. The proportion of Muslims engaged in professions like medicine, engineering or administrative and managerial cadre was very small.

Unequal distribution of social and economic power, resulted not only in fewer educational opportunities for the weaker communities but also in smaller employment chances, even for the educated among them. Thus, the Brahmins, the Nairs and the Syrian Catholics (the forward communities) continued to enjoy a disproportionate advantage in employment opportunities. According to one study, while the forward communities formed one third only of Kerala's population, they held more than 80 per cent of the posts in the University and Transport Corporation and about two-thirds of the gazetted posts in the Secretariat and the Electricity Board (Nossiter, 1982:37).

7. Poverty in Kerala

7.1. The State Income

The annual average growth rate of Kerala's income from 1970-71 to 1984-85 was 11.4 per cent at current prices but the real annual average rate of growth of state income worked out to be 2.9 per cent (Government of Kerala, 1985:7). The annual average growth rate of the population for the same period was 2.0 per cent.

The data in Appendix 5 show that there was a decrease in the share of the primary sector between 1970-71 and 1984-85, whereas the secondary sector recorded a slight increase in its share. The share of the tertiary sector also showed a relatively large increase but most of the growth was in finance and real estate, whose contribution within the

tertiary sector has been comparatively very large. According to many Keralite economists, the performance of the economy in Kerala over the last three decades or so has not been impressive. Kerala's economy over the period between 1959 and 1979 showed the basic characteristics of stagnation with a growth of less than three per cent compound and per capita growth at less than one per cent (Adiseshiah, 1979:v).

7.2. Per Capita Income

In the mid-1980s the per capita income of the State of Kerala remained lower than the per capita national income of India and many other states. In 1981-82 Kerala was ranked as the eleventh poorest state in India. In 1984-85 the per capita income of Kerala was estimated at 2196 Rupees compared to the national per capita income of 2344 Rupees. Per capita income, however, varies from one district of Kerala to another. The latest figures available show that in 1983, the per capita income of Ernakulam district was the highest (2256 Rupees) whereas that for Malappuram district was the lowest (388 Rupees) (Government of Kerala, 1985:90-1). Incidentally, Malappuram district is the only district in Kerala where the great majority (about 64 per cent) of the population are Muslims. It is from this district that about one fifth of the migrants in the community under study have come (see Chapter 3).

The bulk of the economically active members of the population are engaged in work in the primary sector and the great majority of them in agriculture; they are farm

workers, tenants through leasing-in of small amounts of land, or owner-cultivators of small plots of less than one acre. In 1971, holdings of less than one acre constituted about 68 per cent of total holdings of cultivated land in the state compared to about 17.3 per cent for all India (Oommen, 1979:11). Since at least two and a half acres of cultivated land is taken as the minimum requirement for a family subsistence (Nair, 1986:39), the great majority of agricultural households in Kerala are poor, with holdings insufficient for the family maintenance, and, therefore, have to supplement their income by depending on wage labour. Thus, the position of these agricultural households may not differ significantly from that of the agricultural labourers. While there is some evidence that the land reforms in Kerala may have reduced rural inequality (Oommen, 1979:11) they did not have much impact on the level of poverty in rural Kerala.

Since land reform legislation in Kerala did not deal with the problems of agricultural labourers (Nossiter, 1982:301), low wages and insecurity of employment have remained acute and the numbers of unemployed and under-employed agricultural labours have increased year after year. Although the daily wages of the agricultural labourers increased by 1971, the substitution of the permanent labour by casual resulted in the continuation of the poor situation of the agricultural workers. The net worth of the total assets of nearly two thirds of the agricultural workers'

households in rural Kerala was below 500 Rupees (Nossiter, 1982:302).

The National Sample Survey of Consumers' Expenditure for the year 1973-74 measured poverty at a level of 55 Rupees per capita per month in urban areas and at 43 Rupees in rural areas. According to this measurement Kerala was ranked at the sixth lowest state in India, with about 47.32 per cent of its population below the poverty line, of whom about 18.21 per cent were classified as severely impoverished. In urban Kerala the percentage of those below the poverty line was 57.46 per cent, of whom 23.12 per cent were severely impoverished. The situation in rural Kerala, although not as bad as that in the urban areas, is still frightening, with 45.31 percent of the rural population below the poverty line, of whom 17.24 are classified as severely destitute (Oommen, 1979:vi).

8. Employment Situation

Of all the states of India, Kerala has been for the last sixty years or so the state with the highest rates of unemployment (Nair, 1986:45). Successive governments of Kerala have not been able to keep pace with the ever-increasing numbers of job seekers. The numbers of persons engaged in gainful employment⁽²¹⁾, as a proportion of the population of Kerala, has been falling since the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1901 the proportion employed constituted about 44 per cent of Kerala's total population. This proportion decreased to 37 per cent in 1941, to 33.3

per cent in 1961, to about 29 per cent in 1971 (For the 1971 figures see Appendix 6). According to the 1981 census, the proportion fell to 26.7 per cent (Government of Kerala, 1987:4). Thus, about 73.3 per cent of the population in Kerala depended on 26.7 per cent who were actually engaged in gainful employment.

Of the economically active members of the population, less than 16 per cent were in the secondary sector (8.3 per cent in the public sector and about 7.5 per cent in the private sector). The tertiary sector accounted for only 28 per cent of the employed. The largest proportion (about 56 per cent) were engaged in work in the primary sector of the economy; mainly as agriculturists and agricultural labourers (Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985:21).

The decline in the work participation rate was the result of a complex of various factors. Rapid population growth, the dissolution of the joint family system, and the parcelization of land holdings (the end product of land reform legislation), resulted in an increase in numbers of landless agricultural labourers and those with too small a plot of land. Because of the inability of the primary sectors of the economy to accommodate and absorb the increasing supplies of landless agricultural labour into productive employment, there has been a huge increase in rural unemployment. At the same time, the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy failed to expand adequately

to absorb the surplus labour released by the primary sector (Government of Kerala, 1987:4 and Nair, 1986:4).

The organized sector in Kerala has not been developing as to absorb the ever-increasing job seekers. While the total work seekers increased by 737 per cent between 1970 to 1984, employment in the organized sector, both public and private, increased by 53 per cent only (Government of Kerala, 1985:11). In 1970 there were 702,880 persons employed in the organized sector of whom about 58 per cent were in the private sector. Between 1971 and 1976, during the fifth five year plan, the Industrial Development Corporation gave assistance to thirty-four companies to establish new projects and assisted another thirteen companies to expand, established twelve state sector companies and improved some other already existing companies (Nossiter, 1982:285). Although these projects created employment opportunities and the number employed in the public sector increased from 293,318 persons in 1970 to 418,151 persons in 1975, the organized public sector absorbed only a small proportion of the total job seekers in the state, while employment in the private sector remained almost unchanged. From 1976 to 1984 the public sector expanded very slowly to absorb 147,436 job seekers only, whereas the private sector provided jobs for 50,791 persons only. As a matter of fact, employment in the private sector decreased between 1981 and 1984 by 2.8 per cent (Government of Kerala, 1985:11).

Unemployment figures are likely to be inaccurate for many reasons. For instance, people are unlikely to register as unemployed if they are convinced that the probability of getting a job through the employment exchange offices is very small. About 18 per cent of those migrants studied in depth reported that they had not registered with the employment exchange. Mohammad, a 26 year old migrant from Malappuram district, explained his reason for not registering with the employment exchange office as follows:

It is no use to register. If those who hold degrees from the university have to wait for a period of three to five years, maybe more, before they get a job through the employment exchange, how long would a person like myself, who merely completed primary school, have to wait?

Ammar, another 29 year old who completed secondary school commented on the issue in the following terms:

If you have some influential person in the government bureaucracy then you are OK, otherwise you have to wait for ages before they [employment exchange] contact you.

Moreover, employment in the organized sector is relatively small and many people work in family enterprises for short hours or at certain seasons or as seasonal farm workers etc.; these people do not appear in the unemployed figures.

Nonetheless, the unemployment figures of the employment exchange statistics may be of some use in indicating changes in the unemployment situation over time. If the figures are

any guide, the problem of unemployment in Kerala has worsened considerably since 1971. There were 367,400 job seekers in 1971. This figure almost doubled in 1975 and in 1980 the number of those registered with the employment exchange rose to about 1.6 million. By 1985 the figure reached about 2.5 millions; a number that constituted about 10.5 per cent of the total job seekers in the whole of India, about one tenth of the total population of Kerala and nearly one fourth of the labour force in the State (Government of Kerala, 1981:18 and 1985:8).

Another aspect of the unemployment in Kerala is that more than 50 per cent of the work seekers are persons with Secondary School Leaving Certificate (S.S.L.C.) or higher qualifications. In 1984 about 52 per cent of the 23.7 million work seekers were persons with the educational qualification of S.S.L.C. and above, almost 10 percent had received some college-education, nearly 7 per cent were graduates and about one per cent were post-graduates (Government of Kerala, 1985:8).

9. Summary

This chapter has sought to present background information about the state of Kerala with a view to highlighting characteristics which may have had an impact on emigration.

We saw that Kerala is one of India's smallest states, formed by the post-independence reorganisation of state

boundaries on linguistic lines. It is made up of the former south-western state of Travancore and Cochin, together with Malayalam-speaking areas which had previously been part of Madras.

Kerala has witnessed a long period of population explosion, the second stage of demographic transition, reaching an estimated 27.3 million in 1985. This has been ascribed to a high birth rate, low infant mortality and declining death rate. Although the growth rate has fallen since the 1970s, as a result of the Family Planning Programme, it is still high in relation to population density, availability of agricultural land and employment.

The histories and culture of Kerala's three religious communities, the Hindus, Muslims and Christians, have been important in shaping the conditions of the state. The largest group, the Hindus, who make up 60 per cent of the population, traditionally observed a rigid and complex caste system which had far-reaching implications. Development was impeded, for example, by the absence locally of a businessman class. The highest caste, the Nambudiri Brahmins, resisted formal education and involvement in public life until quite recently, in their desire to preserve their ritual status. The second caste were the Nairs, who lost their traditional warrior role with modernization. Their loose marriage relations and control of property by the oldest male of the family group, have been reformed by law, leading to the break-up of properties and

the passing of holdings into other communities. The Nairs have been well-organised, taking a disproportionate share in education, health care, administration and income. Next came the Ezhavas, mostly agricultural labourers, who were more easily reformed than Nairs, by reason of their more diverse marriage and inheritance customs, and their position as an oppressed lower cast, which meant that they stood to gain, rather than lose, by social change. They were quick to accept Western education, and were at the forefront of the movement for reform of the caste system. Lowest in the hierarchy were the scheduled castes and tribes (formerly Untouchables), who, despite legislation, still suffer covert discrimination, and remain predominantly landless labourers.

The Moplah (Muslim) community, especially in Malabar has see-sawed between commercial supremacy and subjugation by the Portuguese, and then the British. Their history of struggle has impeded development, and in general, the Muslim community is still the most backward in Kerala, not having recovered from the years of misery and illiteracy

Kerala's Christians do not form a homogeneous group, but preserve endogamous caste-like distinctions. The highest status is enjoyed by the Syrian Christians, one of the state's most prosperous groups, whose education and concentration have given them considerable political power. Latin and Roman Catholics, Protestants and Evangelicals are also represented.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy in Kerala, providing food, raw materials for industry, and foreign exchange. However, production is erratic, being hampered by topographical and climatic variation, inadequacy of centrally-allocated funds, and administrative weakness and corruption at local level. Irrigation difficulties and tempting prices have, moreover, created a drift from food to cash crops, and food shortage is a major problem.

The industry needed to counter poverty and unemployment is also lacking. It is still dominated by agricultural raw material (e.g. the coir industry) and there are few concerns of any size. Industry has been accorded little priority in the state's development plans, there has been a lack of funds from central allocations or local taxation, and private investors are discouraged by the poor economic and political atmosphere.

In contrast, Kerala has spent heavily on education, and achieved a great reduction in illiteracy, but there has been little advance in professional and technical education.

Kerala is a very unequal society. The complex tenure systems have been basically feudal, and despite land reform legislation giving many tenants ownership right, substantial inequality still exists. There is evidence that land ownership is still predominantly a privilege of the higher castes.

Access to education is also unequal, running parallel with social and economic power. Best off are the Brahmins, Nairs and Syrian Christians, while worst off are the Muslims, who lag behind in formal education, and in professional and technical education, which limits their employment opportunities.

Poverty is a key issue, with most agricultural holdings too small for subsistence. Although there are regional and urban/rural variations, about half the population is below the poverty line, and around 20 per cent severely impoverished. Significantly, the lowest per capita income (388 Rupees in 1985) is in the district of Malappuram where the majority (64 per cent) are Muslims.

Another major problem is unemployment. Population growth, dissolution of the joint family system, and fragmentation of land holdings have increased the number of landless agricultural labourers, who could not be absorbed by other economic sectors. Private sector employment has actually declined, while public sector expansion has been very slow. In the 1981 census, it appeared that 73.3 per cent of the population depended on a mere 26.7 per cent who were gainfully employed. However, it is difficult to get accurate figures, as many people do not register, or do casual work.

Whilst this is not an exhaustive description of the context from which our migrants came, a number of factors are beginning to emerge which are likely to have a bearing

on the migration situation. These will be brought into sharper focus as we examine the characteristics, circumstances and opinions of our respondents in the following chapters - beginning with a profile of the migrants and their households immediately prior to migration and at the time of study.

NOTES

1. The name of the State, "Kerala" according to some historians, was derived from the Arabic name "Khairulla" which was given by the Arab merchants to the Malabar coast many centuries ago, meaning the blessed land (see for example Kareem, 1986, pp. 77-85).
2. The District is the major unit of local administration. In India, districts vary in size and population from state to state, as well as within a state.
3. The Taluk is the first level administrative subdivision of the District.
4. For an account of the rapid declining birth rate in Kerala during this period see Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985, pp. 15-28.
5. The modern history of Kerala has been discussed in detail in Kareem, 1973; Gidwani, 1976 and Khan, 1951.
6. For an elaborated account of the various social movements to abolish the caste system and to reform marriage customs and property rights, see Menon, 1987, pp. 65-75.
7. No separate figures for the income of either Nambudiri or Tamil Brahmins were available.
8. The Ezhavas are known as Chogons in Travancore region and Thiyaas in Malabar.
9. For a detailed account of the trading and commercial activities during this period see Al-Qasimi, 1986 and Kareem, 1973.
10. See also Dale, 1977.
11. For the history of Christianity in Kerala see Brown, 1956 and Tisserant, 1957.
12. Organizationally speaking, the coir industry can be divided according to the production stages into four sectors. The first is the retting (soaking) stage in which the coconut husks are soaked in saline water for eight to ten months. The second is the fibre producing stage in which the soaked husks are manually beaten to produce the fibre and make it ready for the third stage; the spinning of the fibre. In this stage the fibre is spun into yarn either by hand or by wheel. The fourth stage is the manufacture of coir mats, matting, carpets, etc..

13. In interviews conducted by the researcher with Kerala's Chief Minister, Mr. E. K. Nayanar and with the Labour Minister, Mr. K. Pankajakshan. See also Nossiter, 1982, p. 265.
14. For a detailed analysis of the tax system in Kerala see Mathew, 1979.
15. In interviews conducted by the researcher with three members of the Legislative Assembly and two university professors. At their request, their names have been withheld.
16. Through extensive efforts of the literacy movement sponsored by the state government in association with other voluntary agencies, Kerala was to reach the status of the first totally literate state in India in March 1991 (Gulf News, February 27, 1991:7).
17. Information for later years was not available to the researcher.
18. For an account of the enrolment in the lower primary stage in Kerala see Nair, 1979 and Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985.
19. For a detailed account of the tenure system in Kerala see Sankaranarayanan and V. Karunakaran, 1985, pp. 69-127.
20. For an account of the various efforts at land reform in Kerala, see Ibid, pp. 79-91, and Nossiter, 1982, pp. 291-302.
21. Gainful employment here includes all of those employed in the categories indicated in Appendix 6.

CHAPTER THREE

A PROFILE OF THE IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR HOUSEHOLDS

1. Introduction

The discussion in this chapter is based on the information obtained from detailed interviews with 1027 Indian migrants from the State of Kerala, India, who, at the time of the investigation, were living in the area called "Madeenat Zayed" which is situated in the border of the city center of Abu Dhabi; the capital city of the United Arab Emirates. The chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part an attempt will be made to depict the profile of the migrants with special reference to their socioeconomic characteristics. The second part describes the migrants' households in Kerala on the eve of migration.

2. The Migrants

Migration from Kerala to the United Arab Emirates as well as to the Gulf States in general is predominantly a male phenomenon. According to the law in the United Arab Emirates, only those with salaries of 4000 Derhams or more are entitled to bring their families with them. Thus, only some categories of the migrants have this advantage. Those are mainly engaged in "white collar" jobs and other specialized skills and professions.

Since the demand for labour is mainly in construction and other infrastructure projects, most of the migrants leave their families in Kerala. Even those whose monthly salaries are above the prescribed minimum refrain from exercising this privilege. Many reasons were given for giving up this right. Some migrants claimed that they did not send for their families to join them because of the lack of suitable educational and other facilities for their children. Others justified their position by saying that their presence in the U.A.E. was of temporary nature and that they did not know when they would go back. Some others did not think that it was safe to bring their wives and children and leave them on their own during working hours. Nonetheless, the most consistent reason given by the migrants to justify their stand on this issue was in terms of economic factors. To send for their families to join them would necessitate renting a separate house or apartment and setting up an independent household, in which case a large part of their income (from one third to one half) would be spent on the rent. Since one important reason for their migration was to save as much as possible for future use on their return, bringing their families seemed to militate against this objective. One Keralite commented on this as follows:

... It is much better for me to live here alone. Being alone I can live with other Keralites and share the rent and the living expenses with them. In this way I can spend as little as possible, send part of my income to my family back home and yet save some money. If, however, I bring my family here not only

would I not be able to save any money but I would need more than what I make to rent a house and set up an independent household.

Moreover, as a result of the many complaints received by the Government of India about the maltreatment of female domestic servants in some of the Gulf countries, the Government of India have completely banned the emigration of Indian women for purposes of domestic service in the Gulf States (Government of India, 1961:1962-71). Thus, one finds that many village studies of migration from the State of Kerala confirm that all but a few married migrants leave their families behind. According to one village-level study only 2 per cent of the 514 persons who went to the Middle East were women (Commerce Research Bureau, 1978). Another study showed that all but one of the migrants in a sample of 125 households were men (Mathew and Nair, 1978:1145). Moreover, a survey conducted at the State level found that 92.5 percent of a sample of 1865 Gulf migrants were men (Government of Kerala, 1987). In this study it was found that all of the Keralite migrants in the community under investigation were males. This seems to be the case not only for migrants from Kerala but also for migrants from south and south east Asia⁽¹⁾.

2.1 Age

At the time of investigation, it was found that not only were the migrants exclusively men, but they were also young. The data in the following Table 3.1 show that a little more than 80 per cent of the migrants were below 36

years of age. Those who were 36 years of age or older constituted slightly less than twenty per cent, and those who were 60 years of age or older formed only a small proportion; less than one per cent.

TABLE 3.1
MIGRANTS BY AGE GROUPS ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION
AND AT THE TIME OF THE STUDY

AGE GROUP	AT TIME OF THE STUDY		ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION	
	NUMBERS	%	NUMBERS	%
Less than 20 years	53	5.2	152	14.8
20 - 25 years	320	31.1	474	46.1
26 - 30 years	291	28.3	276	26.9
31 - 35 years	162	15.8	105	10.2
36 - 40 years	91	8.9	16	1.6
41 - 45 years	59	5.7	4	0.4
46 - 60 years	44	4.3	—	—
Over 60 years	7	0.7	—	—
TOTAL	1027	100	1027	100

Looking at the age distribution of migrants on the eve of migration, a different picture is observed. All of the migrants were 45 years old or younger when they first migrated to the U.A.E.. The proportion of those below 36 years of age was larger at the time of first migration to the U.A.E.. Migrants belonging to this age group constituted 98 per cent. Those who at the time of first migration were 25 years of age or younger formed the largest proportion (about 61 per cent), whereas those in the age group between

36 and 45 years formed two per cent only. None of the migrants at the time of first migration was over 45 years old.

These results are consistent with the findings of other studies conducted in Kerala. One village-level study showed that 79 per cent of the migrant workers in the Middle East were 35 years of age or younger (Commerce Research Bureau, 1978). In another village study, it was found that 84 per cent of the migrants workers from 125 households were young, below 36 years old (Mathew and Nair, 1978:1146). Moreover, according to a field research conducted in five of Kerala's districts, little more than 78 per cent of a sample of 696 returned migrants were found to be of 35 years of age or younger when they first migrated to work in the Gulf States (Nair, 1986:19).

The general assumptions behind the predominance of young people in migratory flows were: On the one hand, young people are more willing to venture and take risks, they are more adaptable to the new environment in the receiving areas, they have fewer responsibilities toward their families. The host societies, on the other hand, may prefer young migrants for their greater physical ability, their willingness to accept lower wages and work under the most difficult conditions. Nevertheless, one important feature of Kerala State that may have had some bearing on the age distribution pattern of the migrants is the nature of the population profile, which is skewed towards the young. As a

result of the rapid fall in the death rate among infants and the continuing high birth rate, the ratio of the age group below 15 years rose to 41 in 1961 (Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985:20).

2.2 Marital Status

As the data in Table 3.2 below show, slightly less than 60 per cent of the migrants were unmarried at the time of first migration. However, this proportion decreased sharply at the time of investigation to a little less than twenty per cent. Thus, the proportion of the married almost doubled between the time of first migration and the time of the study. In other words, almost 47 per cent of all married persons found in this community got married a few years after migration, during their short visit to their home village/town in Kerala. Moreover, unmarried migrants, as will be discussed in later chapters, who have marriageable sisters usually delay their marriages for several years, until their sisters have married. Cases of separation and widowhood were absent on the eve of migration and the incidence of divorce were very rare. Only four cases of divorce (about 0.4 per cent) were observed.

These findings are consistent with those of other studies of Keralite migrants in the Middle East. In his study of migrants who had returned to Kerala from various Gulf States, Nair found that 50 percent of a sample of 696 returned migrants were unmarried when they first migrated (1986:20). In another study, it was found that almost half

of the migrant workers were single when they went to work in the Gulf countries (Mathew and Nair, 1978:1148).

TABLE 3.2
MIGRANTS BY MARTIAL STATUS ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION
AND AT THE TIME OF THE STUDY

MARTIAL STATU	AT TIME OF THE STUDY		ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION	
	NUMBERS	%	NUMBERS	%
Single	203	19.8	595	57.9
Married	802	78.0	428	41.7
Divorced	12	1.2	4	0.4
Separated	5	0.5		
Widower	5	0.5		
TOTAL	1027	100	1027	100

Although the data in Table 3.2 show that the proportion of the divorced has increased threefold between the time of first migration and the time of investigation and new categories have emerged, namely the separated and the widower, the proportions in these categories are very small; 1.2, 0.5, 0.5 per cent respectively. These observations, however, are quite unexpected. In view of the general impression and the notion held in many quarters that migration causes family disruption, and that marital problems are quite high among migrants, these observations seem to be extremely low.

2.3 Education

As the data in the Table 3.3(a) clearly show, all the migrants were literate. The great majority of them, however, had completed primary school only. This group formed about 62 per cent of the migrants. Those educated up to the secondary school accounted for 34 per cent, whereas those with college education but no degree and the degree holders constituted a very small number. They were slightly over three and one per cent respectively.

TABLE 3.3(a)
MIGRANTS BY GENERAL EDUCATION

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	NUMBER OF PERSONS	%
Primary school	633	61.6
Secondary school	349	34.0
College-education (with no degree)	34	3.3
Degree holders	11	1.1
TOTAL	1027	100

The distribution of the migrants according to their age groups and level of education shows no definite relationship. Generally speaking, however, a negative relationship between age and level of education seems to emerge. As the Table 3.3(b) shows, level of education appears to increase as age increases.

TABLE 3.3(b)

MIGRANTS BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND AGE
ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION (%)

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	AGE GROUPS					
	L.T. 20 YEARS	20-25 YEARS	26-30 YEARS	31-35 YEARS	36-40 YEARS	41-45 YEARS
Primary school	46.7	58.4	65.9	80.0	100.0	75.0
Secondary school	44.7	38.6	28.3	18.1	—	25.0
College education (with no degree)	8.6	1.9	3.6	1.9	—	—
Degree holders	—	1.1	2.2	—	—	—
TOTAL	%	100	100	100	100	100
	n.	152	474	276	105	16

The findings that all of the migrants in the community under study were literate, at least in their own dialect, strongly dispel the general impression prevalent among the U.A.E. locals, and contradict the generalization made by some writers⁽²⁾ that great majority of Asian migrants are illiterate⁽³⁾. Although, the main dialect of all Keralite migrants is "Malyalum", the great majority of them speak another dialect such as Hindi, Urdu or Tamil, and quite a few of them (about 19 per cent) speak English. A smaller percentage (about 3 percent) speak Arabic. Those are exclusively among Muslim migrants. Similar findings have been reported by other studies on migrant labour conducted elsewhere. According to one study on the migrants from the Indian Sub- continent working in Kuwait about 49 per cent of the 170 migrant interviewed had either completed primary or

high school and about 40 per cent possessed a university degree (Sen, 1986:269)⁽⁴⁾.

These findings were neither surprising nor unexpected. Kerala has been leading the rest of India in the field of education for the last three decades. Kerala is the only State in India with the status of totally literate. The above findings suggest that the level of education of the migrants from one Asian country is not necessarily reflected by their level of occupation. A Keralite semi-skilled or even unskilled manual worker or caretaker in the U.A.E. may have completed high school or even have university education (see Chapter 5).

2.4 Vocational Training

Although all of the migrants were educated, at least at the primary level, the great majority of them had no vocational training on the eve of migration. The data in Table 3.4 suggest that only 12 per cent (123 person) of the migrants had vocational training of one sort or another. Of those who had such training, more than two fifths (52 persons) had training in driving or machine operating, less than fifteen per cent (18 persons) had training in shorthand and typewriting, and about 17 per cent had construction related training.

The finding that 88 per cent of the migrants had no vocational training whatsoever seems to be quite normal, since programmes for vocationalization of education were

absent from the education system of Kerala State. It was not until recently that vocational programmes were introduced in 71 High and Technical High Schools (Government of Kerala, 1985:4). Thus, it is not surprising that the findings of this study confirm the results of other studies. According to one study, 69 per cent of the 1865 Gulf States migrants covered in a survey of 1467 remittance receiving households had no vocational training when they first went to work in the Gulf States (Government of Kerala, 1987:18).

TABLE 3.4

MIGRANTS BY VOCATIONAL TRAINING ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION

TYPE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING	NUMBER OF PERSONS	%
Carpentry / Plumbing / Welding	21	2.0
Refrigeration / Air conditioning	2	0.2
Mechanic		
Automobile Mechanic	5	0.5
T.V. / Radio Mechanic	3	0.3
Driving / Machine operating	52	5.1
Short hand & typewriting	18	1.7
Photography	4	0.4
Electrician	13	1.3
Tailoring	5	0.5
No vocational training	904	88.0
TOTAL*	1027	100

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

2.5 Work Experience

Not only were large proportions of the migrants on the eve of migration young, unmarried, with little education and no vocational training, but, as suggested by the data in the

Table 3.5, almost half of them had never worked before they came to the U.A.E.. Moreover, although about 53 per cent of the migrants had work experience of one kind or another at the time of migration, almost three fifths of these had been unskilled workers. The rest (about two fifths) rated themselves as having work skills of some kind.

TABLE 3.5
MIGRANTS BY WORK EXPERIENCE ON THE
EVE OF MIGRATION

TYPE OF WORK EXPERIENCE	NUMBER OF PERSONS	%
Farmer / Farm worker / Gardener	31	3.0
Mason / Carpenter / Painter / Plumber / Electrician	30	2.9
Driver / Machine operator	37	3.6
Tailor / Cook / Barber / Lauderer	17	1.6
Typist / Clerk	18	1.8
School teacher	2	0.2
Salesman / Petty trader	40	3.9
Fisherman / Fishmonger	38	3.7
Unskilled worker	317	30.9
Others	14	1.4
No work experience	483	47.0
TOTAL	1027	100

2.6 Occupational Status

The information in Table 3.6 shows that migrants in the professional categories (engineer, accountant, teacher, etc.) accounted for little more than one per cent (11 persons) only. The proportion of those who rated themselves

as skilled and semi-skilled workers constituted about 17 per cent (168 persons only), and the unskilled group formed 17.6 per cent or 181 persons. Thus, the status of the great majority of the migrants on the eve of migration was unemployed. Those formed about 65 per cent of the entire community.

TABLE 3.6

MIGRANTS BY OCCUPATION STATUS ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION

OCCUPATION STATUS	NUMBER OF PERSONS	%
Engineer	3	0.3
Accountant	6	0.6
Teacher	2	0.2
Driver / Machine operator	20	1.9
Tailor / Cook / Barber / Lauderer	17	1.6
Typist / Clark	10	1.0
Electrician / Carpenter / Plumber/Painter	18	1.8
Mason / Quarry man	8	0.8
Farmer / Farm worker / Gardener	13	1.3
Fisherman / Fishmonger	30	2.9
Salesman / Petty trader	52	5.1
Unskilled laborer	181	17.6
Unemployed	667	64.9
TOTAL	1027	100

2.7 Activity Status

It could be seen from the following table that those who actually were employed on the eve of migration rated 35 per cent only and the remaining 65 per cent were unemployed. Among the employed, however, about 82 per cent of them were

employees on a wage or salary basis, and a little less than one fifth of them were self employed.

TABLE 3.7
MIGRANTS BY ACTIVITY STATUS ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION

ACTIVITY STATUS	NUMBER OF PERSONS	%
Unemployed	667	64.9
Employed in wage / salary employment	295	28.7
Self employed	65	6.3
TOTAL*	1027	100

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

These findings contradict the widely held assumption that the large scale migration of the Keralite to the Gulf States was triggered by the higher wage/salary earnings offered in these countries. The present study clearly shows that more than the supposedly lucrative earnings, the acute unemployment in Kerala seems to be the most important motivating factor behind the recent migration of at least the unskilled and semi-skilled Keralites to the U.A.E.. As will be discussed later in the chapter, a large proportion of the migrants covered by the study came to the U.A.E. without securing jobs in advance and, moreover, quite a few of them had been staying in the country without any job for quite some time; as long as three years in some cases. Now,

if these findings are coupled with that observed earlier, it becomes clear that the acute employment situation in Kerala could very well be the most important factor motivating these people to migrate.

This is not to say that other factors are not important. Indeed, what has been accomplished by the earlier migrants from Kerala to the Gulf States has encouraged many others to follow suit. One village study showed that the remittances received by the emigrants' households in the village of Perumathura was the first incentive for the natives of this village to migrate (Mathew and Nair, 1978). But higher earnings in the Gulf States can explain neither the emigration flows of the 1950s and 1960s, nor the high migration from Kerala to other parts of the Indian subcontinent. It is estimated that at the beginning of 1980 more than half of the total number of Keralite job seekers outside Kerala were still located in other States within India (Gulati, 1986:196).

As indicated earlier, Kerala is the most densely populated state in India, with a population density of 655 person per sq.km.. The population of Kerala approximated 25.5 million in 1981 (Government of India, 1988:690). Moreover, the population profile is skewed towards the young. In 1965, 51 percent of the population were below 19 years of age, 43 per cent below 15 and 15 per cent below 5 years old. This youthful structure of the population constituted a real constraint to the scarce resources of

Kerala State in general and to employment in particular (Nossiter, 1982:45).

In the last 35 years, the state of Kerala has not been able to generate enough employment opportunities to keep pace with the ever increasing number of job seekers. As a result, the work participation rate, declined from an already low rate of 33.3 per cent in 1961 to 29.1 per cent in 1971 and to 26.5 per cent in 1981. Thus there has been a steady increase in the unemployment and underemployment rates in Kerala (Government of Kerala, 1987:4). Although unemployment is a problem in every state in India, it reached menacing proportion in Kerala. By 1986 the unemployment rate reached 27 per cent in Kerala compared to the all-India average of 5 per cent (Nair, 1988:58).

2.8 Dependency Status

As the data in Table 3.8 indicate, the migrants in the community under study varied in terms of their status of dependency or otherwise in the household. The great majority (65.5 per cent), however, had been dependents when they first migrated to the U.A.E.. On the eve of migration, 15.6 per cent only had been heads of households while slightly fewer than 19 per cent were in the category of other income earners.

Surprisingly, a relatively large proportion of those reported as dependents were found to have been married on the eve of migration and one person had been divorced. The

proportion of unmarried persons among heads of households was expectedly the lowest, higher among the income earning members and the highest among dependents.

TABLE 3.8
MIGRANTS BY DEPENDENCY STATUS ON
THE EVE OF MIGRATION

DEPENDANCE STATU S	PROPORTIONS	
	NUMBERS	%
Head of households	160	15.6
Other income earning members	194	18.9
Dependents	673	65.5
TOTAL	1027	100

TABLE 3.9(a)
MIGRANTS BY EARNING STATUS ON THE
EVE OF MIGRATION

EARNING LEVEL PER MONTH (in Rupees)	NUMBER OF PERSONS	%
NO EARNING	525	51.1
LESS THAN 100	50	4.9
100 TO 250	152	14.8
251 TO 500	181	17.6
501 TO 1,000	70	6.8
OVER 1,000	49	4.8
TOTAL	1027	100

2.9 Earning Status

As the data in Table 3.9(a) show, a large proportion (51.1 per cent) of the migrants had been non-earners on the eve of migration. A little less than 20 per cent had monthly earnings of 250 Rupees or less. The proportion of those who earned between 250 and 1000 Rupees accounted for about 24 per cent only. Those who reported to have earnings of more than 1000 Rupees formed 4.8 per cent of the migrants in the community under study.

Crosstabulating earning status of the migrants by their activity status resulted in rather interesting observations. First, quite a few (144 persons) of those who reported to have been unemployed claimed to have had monthly incomes of 250 Rupees or less at the time of migration. These accounted for 21.5 per cent of the reportedly unemployed (see Table 3.9(b)). These earnings which might be called "unearned income" presumably came from sources other than work, such as rents, interest and remittances from relatives working outside Kerala, in other States in India or in the Gulf States. Second, two persons who reported to have been employed rated themselves as non-earners. It seems that the employment in which they were engaged must have been nominal with very little economic gain. Third, comparing those employed on wage or salary bases to those in the self-employed category one finds that the latter were better off. All but one (98.5 per cent) of those who reported to have

been self-employed have had monthly earnings of 501 Rupees or more (an income which may be considered not too low by Indian standards). Two fifths of them had earnings between 501 and 1,000 Rupees and slightly less than 59 per cent had earnings of more than a 1,000 Rupees. Fourth, among the wage/salary employees, only the professionals (two teachers, three engineers and six accountants) had monthly incomes of more than 1000 Rupees. These formed 3.7 per cent.

TABLE 3.9(b)

MIGRANTS BY EARNING AND ACTIVITY STATUS
ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION (%)

MONTHLY INCOME ON ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION (in Rupees)	ACTIVITY STATUS			
	UNEMPLOYED	ON WAGE AND SALARY	SELF EMPLOYED	TOTAL
NO EARNING	78.4	0.7	—	51.1
LESS THAN 100	6.7	1.7	—	4.9
100 TO 250	14.8	18.0	—	14.8
251 TO 500	—	61.0	1.5	17.6
501 TO 1,000	—	14.9	40.0	6.8
OVER 1,000	—	3.7	58.5	4.8
TOTAL* %	100	100	100	100
n.	667	295	65	1027

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

In general terms earnings are found to be higher among those in the higher age groups than in the lower age groups and among married than unmarried (see Tables 1.9(c) and 1.9(d) below).

TABLE 3.9(c)

MIGRANTS BY EARNING STATUS AND AGE ON THE
EVE OF MIGRATION (%)

EARNING LEVEL PER MONTH (in Rupees)	AGE GROUPS					
	L.T. 20 YEARS	20-25 YEARS	26-30 YEARS	31-35 YEARS	36-40 YEARS	41-45 YEARS
NO EARNING	70.4	63.9	38.8	5.7	12.5	—
LESS THAN 100	7.2	5.1	2.9	4.8	12.5	—
100 TO 250	9.2	10.8	18.8	23.8	62.5	—
251 TO 500	7.2	12.2	17.0	56.2	12.5	100
501 TO 1,000	5.9	5.3	10.9	5.7	—	—
OVER 1,000	—	2.7	11.5	3.8	—	—
TOTAL* %	100	100	100	100	100	100
n.	152	474	276	105	16	4

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

TABLE 3.9(d)

MIGRANTS BY EARNING AND MARITAL STATUS ON THE
EVE OF MIGRATION (%)

EARNING LEVEL PER MONTH (in Rupees)	MARITAL STATUS		
	SINGLE	MARRIED*	TOTAL
NO EARNING	61.7	36.5	51.1
LESS THAN 100	7.2	1.6	4.9
100 TO 250	13.4	16.7	14.8
251 TO 500	8.9	29.6	17.6
501 TO 1,000	5.1	9.3	6.8
OVER 1,000	3.7	6.3	4.8
TOTAL %	100	100	100
n.	596	432	1027

* Married includes the four divorce cases

2.10 Religion

The great majority of the migrants, nearly 86 per cent, were found to be Muslims. The proportion of Muslims among the Keralite migrants in the community under study is much higher than their share in the total population in Kerala, which forms only little more than 20 per cent. In spite of the fact that the Hindus constitute the great majority of the population back home, they formed merely 13 per cent of the migrants under investigation. Christians, while forming about one fifth of the population of Kerala, were only slightly over one per cent of the community under study, as the data in Table 3.10(a) show.

TABLE 3.10(a)
MIGRANTS BY RELIGIOUS GROUP

RELIGIOUS GROUPS	NUMBERS	%
MUSLIM	882	85.9
HINDU	133	13.0
CHRISTIAN	12	1.2
TOTAL*	1027	100

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

That Muslims from Kerala have migrated to the U.A.E., as well as other Gulf States, in much larger proportions than Hindus and Christians, has been established by other studies (Gulati, 1983:2221 and Nair, 1986:31). This can be

seen as the result of many factors. In addition to the obvious religious component, there are historical, economic and cultural factors. Islam has been established in Kerala (then called Malabar) since the eighth century (Nossiter, 1982:23) and some writers maintain that the settlement of the Arab merchants in Kerala started much earlier than this date. Kareem (1986) argues that the commercial links between the people of Malabar and the Arabs started not later than the first century:

The Arabs were the intermediaries who carried out the commerce between the Orient and the Occident. Muslim Arabs and their settlements in Malabar were numerous in the latter half of the 7th century (Kareem, 1986:77).

Ever since the Arab merchants established trading links with the coastal part of Kerala, Hindus from low castes increasingly converted to Islam, driven by the social inequality that was prevalent in the caste system of the Hindu religion. "They considered the conversion to Islam as an emancipation from the caste slavery" (Kareem, 1986:78). Conversion to Islam, however, has not been limited to the low castes only. Many converts have been from high-caste Hindu Nairs (Nossiter, 1982:24).

It was not long, however, before Arabs entered into marital relationships with the Muslim natives of Malabar. How extensive, or in which direction, these relations were is very difficult to assert. None the less, the fact remains that many Muslim families in Kerala nowadays trace their

ancestors to those Arab trading pioneers. Mustapha, a young man from Cannanor district commented during an interview⁽⁵⁾:

My grandfather used to say that we are the descendants of Sayed Ali; an Arab trader who came with other Arab merchants and settled in Cannanor a long time ago.

These Muslim communities have increased both by extensive conversion from Hinduism and by natural increase. The Muslim population today constitutes slightly over twenty per cent of the total population of Kerala. In an interview Dr. Kareem, an Indian historian from Kerala, argued that the Muslim population in Kerala approximates 25 per cent of the population in the State⁽⁶⁾.

The trading links, once established by the Arab pioneers, were maintained by the native Muslims. Trading and commerce became their monopoly long before the advent of the Portuguese, and when the Maysoreans under the leadership of Haider Ali and later his son Tipu Sultan invaded Kerala in the second half of the 18th century, trade relations between Kerala and the Arabs increased more than ever. Tipu Sultan established strong commercial links with the Gulf States by sending missions and ambassadors and establishing factories and warehouses in those countries (Kareem, 1973:167-170).

These strong religious, commercial and cultural relations enabled the native Muslims of Kerala to migrate to the Arab Gulf States and establish themselves as merchants, brokers to Arab merchants and agents of Indian merchants. Migrants from north India also came and settled in large

numbers in the region, particularly in the Trucial States (now The U.A.E.) and Oman. For instance, six to seven per cent of the population in the town of Matrah during the 18th century and about 14 per cent of the 12000 inhabitants in the city of Muscat were Indian merchants (Al-Qasimi, 1986:7).

As the first flows of the Indian migrants settled in the region they began to encourage their relatives to follow suit. Thus, when the need for labour increased in the Arab States of the Gulf as the development and modernization process accelerated, the recruiting channels between Kerala, as well as other parts of India, and the Gulf had already been established by the pioneering migrants from these areas. Those pioneers, with some Arab natives, made it their business to import cheap labour from India in general and from Kerala in particular. Importing labour from India turned out to be a profitable business. The process of recruiting labour from Kerala will be discussed in more details in the subsequent chapters. In addition to the above-mentioned factors there are some other immediate reasons as well. These are examined in some detail in the following pages.

Not much difference was found in the age distribution of migrants between the different religious groups. As the data in Table 3.10(b) shows, except for 2.3 per cent of the Muslim group, the entire population in the three religious groups was found to be of 35 years of age or younger on the

eve of migration. The great majority in the Muslim and Hindu groups, however, were 25 years old or younger. The proportions were 60 per cent and 70.7 per cent respectively. The proportion of those between 26 and 35 years of age was higher among Christians than among Muslims

TABLE 3.10(b)
AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE MIGRANTS ON THE EVE
OF MIGRATION BY RELIGION (%)

AGE GROUPS ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION	RELIGIOUS GROUPS		
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN
BELOW 20 YEARS	13.2	27.1	—
20 TO 25 YEARS	46.8	43.6	25.0
26 TO 30 YEARS	27.2	21.8	58.3
31 TO 35 YEARS	10.5	7.5	16.7
36 TO 40 YEARS	1.8	—	—
41 TO 45 YEARS	0.5	—	—
TOTAL	%	100	100
	n.	882	12

and Hindus. As a matter of fact, the lowest age for a Christian migrant on the eve of migration was 23 years, whereas the youngest Muslims and Hindus had been 18 and 19 years respectively. Moreover, 11.3 per cent of the Muslim group and 24 Hindu group were found to have been 18 and 19 years of age respectively when they first migrated to the U.A.E.. This is probably due to the fact that Christians generally invest more years in education than Hindus and Muslims do. Looking at the other end of the age continuum,

one finds that at the time of migration, the highest age for Hindus and Christians was 35 years compared to 45 years for Muslims.

The educational distribution of the migrants by their religious affiliation shows that general education of the Muslims was the lowest, whereas that of the Christians was the highest and that of the Hindus was somewhere in between. None of the Christian group was found to have education lower than high school; the great majority of them had college education and one fourth of them were degree holders. The opposite picture was found among the Muslim group. As the data in Table 3.10(c) show the great majority of them (nearly 68 per cent) had education at primary level, whereas those with some college education were slightly over

TABLE 3.10(c)

**EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF THE MIGRANTS ON THE EVE
OF MIGRATION BY RELIGION (%)**

EDUCATIONAL STATUS	RELIGIOUS GROUPS		
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN
PRIMARY SCHOOL	67.7	27.1	—
SECONDARY SCHOOL	29.7	63.9	16.7
COLLEGE EDUCATION (NO DEGREE)	2.2	6.0	58.3
DEGREE HOLDERS	0.5	3.0	25.0
TOTAL*	%	100	100
	n.	882	133
		133	12

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

2 per cent and the degree holders constituted merely half per cent. The educational attainment of the Hindus, although lower than that of the Christians, was much higher than that of the Muslims. The great majority of the Hindus (about 73 per cent) had secondary school education or higher and only 27 per cent of them had only primary school education.

These results are consistent with the findings observed by Nair (1986:31). The pattern of educational distribution observed in this study seems to agree with what is known of the educational status of the three religious communities and the patterns observed in the general population in the State of Kerala (Abdul kareem, 1986:77-90). Invistigating the causes and consequences of educational backwardness of Muslims in Kerala, Abdul Kareem maintains that the most important reason behind the social and economic backwardness of the Muslim community in Kerala is their relative backwardness in education (1986:77). As indicated in Chapter 2, Muslims' attitude towards modern education, at least up to the end of the first half of the 20th century, had been negative. But at least to some degree, the poor educational attainment by Muslims may reflect socio-economic rather than religious differences. There is some evidence suggesting that access to educational facilities varies directly with the socio-economic level of the students' households. Those with high socio-economic status do get easier access than others. Moreover, the bulk of the educational facilities (particularly at levels higher than primary education) are concentrated in the urban area. In Malabar region for

instance, where the majority of the Muslims live, the bulk of the schools, save the primary level, are located in the urban areas which account for only 10 per cent of the population (Nair, 1979:97). The severe poverty prevalent among Muslims living in the rural areas prevented them from attaining schools higher than primary, disproportionately located in some urban centres and run by private agencies (59 per cent of lower primary schools, 68 per cent of upper primary schools, 65 per cent of high schools and 75 of colleges were, in 1978-79, privately owned and managed). In 1981-82, the per capita income in Malappuram district where Muslims constitute a majority (about 64 per cent of the total population) was at current prices 960.09 Rupees which was the lowest among all districts in Kerala (Abdul Kareem, 1986:87). Moreover, due to the acute economic need, children had to drop out from school and work to support the family income. The enrolment of Muslim children in the Class 10 expressed as percentage of enrolment in Class 1 was in 1964-65 the lowest (6.3 per cent only) compared to that of other communities' children (Nair, 1979:98). Although in 1982-83 the enrolment of the Muslim children in Class 10 improved considerably (about 26 per cent) they were still lagging behind the children of other communities (Abdul Kareem, 1986:86).

As in education, Muslim migrants were found to be lagging behind in terms of vocational training. Nearly nine tenths of the Muslim group had no vocational training whatsoever, compared to 83 per cent of the Hindus and 75 per

cent of the Christians. As Table 3.10(d) shows not only was the proportion of the Muslims who had vocational training smaller than that of the other religious groups but their proportion in each vocational category was lower than that of the Hindu and Christian groups except in the first category.

TABLE 3.10(d)

VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF THE MIGRANTS ON THE EVE
OF MIGRATION BY RELIGION (%)

VOCATIONAL TRAINING	RELIGIOUS GROUPS		
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN
CARPENTRY/PLUMBING/WELDING	2.2	1.5	—
REFRIGERATION/A.C. MECHANIC	0.1	0.8	—
AUTOMOBILE MECHANIC	0.3	1.5	—
TV/RADIO MECHANIC	0.2	0.8	—
DRIVING/MACHINE OPERATING	4.8	6.0	16.7
SHORT HAND & TYPEWRITING	1.7	2.3	—
POHOTOGRAPHY	0.2	1.5	—
ELECTRICIAN	1.1	1.5	8.3
TAILORING	0.5	0.8	—
NO VOCATIONAL TRAINING	88.9	83.5	75.0
TOTAL*	%	100	100
	n.	882	12

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

As Table 3.10(e) shows, the distribution of migrants by their work experience and religious affiliation does not differ greatly from that observed in education and vocational training. Christians maintained their superior position in terms of work experience. Each and every one of them was found to have had one type of work experience or

another on the eve of migration. Although slightly more than 62 per cent of the Hindus had some kind of work experience, the great majority of them had work experience as unskilled workers. Looking at the Muslim group, however, one finds that the great majority of them (about 60 per cent) had no work experience at all on the eve of migration and 18.5 per cent had work experience as unskilled workers.

TABLE 3.10(e)

WORK EXPERIENCE OF MIGRANTS ON THE EVE
OF MIGRATION BY RELIGION (%)

WORK EXPERIENCE	RELIGIOUS GROUPS		
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN
FARMER/FARM WORKER/GARDENER	3.5	—	—
MASON/CARPENTER/PAINTER			
PLUMBER/ELECTRICIAN	2.9	2.3	8.3
DRIVER/MACHINE OPERATOR	3.1	6.0	16.7
TAILOR/COOK/BARBER/LAUNDERER	1.6	2.3	—
TYPIST/CLERK	1.2	3.0	25.0
SCHOOL TEACHER	0.2	—	—
SALESMAN/PETTY TRADE	4.1	2.3	8.3
FISHERMAN/FISHMONGER	4.3	—	—
UNSKILLED WORKER	18.5	42.9	—
OTHER	0.5	3.8	41.7
NO WORK EXPERIENCE	60.1	37.6	—
TOTAL* %	100	100	100
n.	882	133	12

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

As Table 3.10(f) shows, the distribution of migrants by their activity status and their religious affiliation shows that while 92 percent of the Christian group and 61 per cent of the Hindus had had some kind of employment on the eve of

migration, about 30.4 per cent only of the Muslim group had any employment.

TABLE 3.10(f)
ACTIVITY STATUS BY RELIGIOUS GROUP
ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION (%)

ACTIVITY STATUS	RELIGIOUS GROUP		
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN
Unemployed	69.6	39.1	8.3
Employed in wage/salary employment	24.8	48.9	91.7
Self employed	5.6	12.0	—
TOTAL %	100	100	100
n.	882	133	12

It was also found that about 81.7 per cent and 80.2 per cent of the Muslims and Hindus respectively who had some kind of employment on the eve of migration were actually engaged in wage or salary employment and those engaged in self employment formed 18.3 and 19.8 per cent only of the employed Muslims and Hindus respectively. All of the employed Christians, however, were engaged in wage or salary employment.

The finding that the proportion of Muslims who were employed on the eve of migration was very small compared to that of the Hindus and Christians seems to support the argument of Dr. Kareem and others, that in Kerala there is covert, if not overt, discrimination against Muslims, as

well as against the backward communities and scheduled castes and tribes. In an interview with Dr. Kareem, he asserted that although untouchability and other forms of overt discrimination and oppression on the basis of caste or religion have been less prevalent in Kerala since the 1970s, nonetheless, Muslims in Kerala were under-represented in virtually every department of the public sectors⁽⁷⁾. Muslims who were employed in various government services constituted 6.3 per cent only of the total employment force. In Kerala University, Muslims formed merely 2.19 per cent, in industries under government they constituted but 7.41 per cent, and in the government companies, their share was 1.81 per cent only (Abdul Kareem, 1986:89).

According to the Centre for Development Studies, inequality in the distribution of social and economic power in the society resulted in inequality and stagnation of employment opportunities. The higher strata of society continue to enjoy a differential advantage in terms of the waiting period for salaried jobs and income secured on employment. Although the backward communities such as the Muslims, the Latin Catholics and Scheduled Castes and Tribes have made noticeable progress in terms of educational attainment, they are still under-represented among the Government employees, while Brahmins, Syrian Christians and Nairs are over-represented. Thus, the discussion of the educated job market in Kerala held by the Centre for Development Studies in Trivandrum concluded that in Kerala, the role that educational expansion has been able to play is

extremely limited in reducing the prevalent social and economic inequality in the state (1977:126-131).

In terms of earnings, the data in Table 3.10(g) indicate that on the eve of migration, slightly more than 55 per cent of the Muslim group in the community under study were among those reporting no earnings. The proportion for Hindus and Christians was 27.8 and 16.7 per cent respectively. The percentage of those with earnings of 250 Rupees or less was larger among Hindus (33 per cent) than among the Muslim group (17.9 per cent). None of the Christian migrants was found in these categories. The proportion of those with earnings of more than 250 Rupees was found to be the highest among Christians and the lowest among Muslims.

TABLE 3.10(g)
EARNINGS OF THE MIGRANTS ON THE EVE OF
MIGRATION BY RELIGION (%)

EARNING PER MONTH (In Rupees)	RELIGIOUS GROUPS		
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN
NO EARNINGS	55.1	27.8	16.7
LESS THAN Rs. 100	3.4	15.0	—
Rs. 100 TO Rs. 250	14.5	18.0	—
Rs. 251 TO Rs. 500	16.4	24.8	25.0
Rs. 501 TO Rs. 1000	6.7	5.3	33.3
MORE THAN Rs. 1000	3.9	9.0	25.0
TOTAL* %	100	100	100
n.	882	133	12

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

2.11 Place of Origin in Kerala

Keralite migrants came to Abu Dhabi from all of the three regions of Kerala. Migrants from at least ten of Kerala's fourteen districts were found in the community under study. The largest number of migrants, however, came from the northern districts of Malappuram, Calicut, Cannanor and Palghat, all of which are situated in the region of Malabar. These four districts accounted for about 53 per cent of the migrants. A smaller proportion (about 26 per cent) came from the four districts of Trivandrum, Quilon, Alleppey and Kottayam in the southern region of Travancore. The remaining 21 per cent came from Trichur and Eranculam districts, both of which are in the central region of Cochin.

A district-wise breakdown revealed that the five districts that had the largest shares of migrants to Abu Dhabi were Trichur, Malappuram, Trivandrum, Calicut and Cannanore. As Table 3.11(a) shows, these five districts accounted for about 79 per cent of the migrants. The corresponding shares of these districts were 19.7, 19.2, 14.3, 13.4, and 12.1 per cent respectively. The rest of the migrants (about 21 per cent) came from the other five districts. Palghat and Quilon contributed 6.2 and 7.5 per cent respectively, Alleppey accounted for 2.7 per cent and Erankulam and Kottayam together supplied 3 per cent; 1.5 per cent each⁽⁸⁾.

TABLE 3.11(a)

DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS
BY DISTRICT OF ORIGIN

DISTRICTS	NUMBERS	%
MALAPPURAM	197	19.2
CALICUT	138	13.4
CANNANORE	124	12.1
PALGHAT	84	8.2
SUBTOTAL	543	52.9
TRICHUR	202	19.7
ERANKULAM	15	1.5
SUBTOTAL	217	21.2
TRIVANDRUM	147	14.3
QUILON	77	7.5
ALLEPPEY	28	2.7
KOTTAYAM	15	1.5
SUBTOTAL	267	26.0
TOTAL*	1027	100

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

Unlike Hindus and Christians, Muslim migrants came from all of the ten districts as the data in Table 3.11(b) reveal. Hindu migrants came from seven districts only and Christians came from merely four. Not only had Muslims come from all of the ten districts, but also, their share was the largest in each and every district. Except for the district of Palghat where the Muslim share was slightly over 60 per cent, their share exceeded 80 per cent in all districts. It is worth noting, however, that of all fourteen districts of

Kerala State, Malappuram is the only district with a Muslim majority.

TABLE 3.11(b)
DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS BY DISTRICT OF
ORIGIN AND RELIGION (%)

DISTRICTS	RELIGIOUS GROUPS			TOTAL	
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	%	n.
MALAPPURAM	94.9	5.1	—	100	197
CALICUT	87.7	12.3	—	100	138
CANNANORE	85.5	14.5	—	100	124
PALGHAT	61.9	38.1	—	100	84
TRICHUR	87.6	11.4	1.0	100	202
ERANKULAM	100	—	—	100	15
TRIVANDRUM	83.0	17.0	—	100	147
QUILON	85.7	10.4	3.9	100	77
ALLEPPEY	85.7	—	14.3	100	28
KOTTAYAM	80.0	—	20.0	100	15
TOTAL %	85.9	13.0	1.2	100	
TOTAL n.	882	133	12		1027

The great majority of migrants, however, came from rural areas. As the data in Table 3.11(c) show, their proportion was slightly more than 81 per cent compared to little more than 18 per cent for those coming from urban localities. In all of the ten districts, there are more migrants coming from rural areas than those coming from urban areas. This seems to be the case for migrants from south and south east Asia as a whole⁽⁹⁾.

These findings reflect the true picture of the distribution of the population of Kerala between rural and urban areas. Although urbanization is accelerating in India

as a whole, the urban population in Kerala is still very small. Kerala is overwhelmingly a rural state with about 81 per cent of its population living in rural areas and only 19 per cent urban (Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985:10).

TABLE 3.11(c)
DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS BY DISTRICT OF
ORIGIN AND AREA (%)

DISTRICTS	AREA		TOTAL	
	RURAL	URBAN	%	n.
MALAPPURAM	81.7	18.3	100	197
CALICUT	85.5	14.5	100	138
CANNANORE	82.3	17.7	100	124
PALGHAT	75.0	25.0	100	84
TRICHUR	80.7	19.3	100	202
ERANKULAM	60.0	40.0	100	15
TRIVANDRUM	83.7	16.3	100	147
QUILON	83.1	16.9	100	77
ALLEPPEY	82.1	17.9	100	28
KOTTAYAM	80.0	20.0	100	15
TOTAL	%	81.6	18.4	100
	n.	838	189	1027

2.12 Year of First Migration

The data in Ttable 3.12(a) show that migrants from Kerala included persons who migrated to Abu Dhabi as early as 1966 (long before the dramatic increase in oil prices) as well as persons who came as recently as 1988 (after the steep decline in oil prices). The corresponding percentages of migrants for 1966 and 1988 were 0.8 and 14.4 respectively. Those who came to the U.A.E. before 1975

formed about 11.3 per cent whereas those who came between 1975 and 1985 amounted to 57.4 per cent and the rest, about 31.3 per cent arrived in the U.A.E. after 1985. As a matter of fact not less than 60 persons (about 5.8 per cent of the migrants under study) arrived during the conduct of the field work.

TABLE 3.12(a)

MIGRANTS BY YEAR OF MIGRATION
AND RELIGIOUS GROUP

YEAR OF MIGRATION	RELIGIOUS GROUPS			TOTAL	
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	n.	%
1966-1971	45	—	—	45	4.4
72	12	1	—	13	1.3
73	25	—	—	25	2.4
74	32	1	—	33	3.2
75	26	4	—	30	2.9
76	28	4	1	33	3.2
77	28	4	1	33	3.2
78	49	8	—	57	5.6
79	42	8	—	50	4.9
1980	35	7	1	43	4.2
81	32	5	2	39	3.8
82	38	2	1	41	4.0
83	85	13	—	98	9.5
84	68	17	1	86	8.4
85	68	9	2	79	7.7
86	53	16	1	70	6.8
87	86	16	2	104	10.1
88	130	18	—	148	14.4
TOTAL	882	133	12	1027	100

The findings observed here seem to confirm the findings in other studies. Nair, in his study of migrants who have returned to Kerala, indicates that 21.5 per cent of the returned migrants had migrated to work in the Gulf States

before 1973 and that about 74 per cent of them were in the U.A.E.(1986:37). The point to be made here is that migration from India in general and from Kerala in particular to the U.A.E. and other Gulf States started long before the so called "oil boom". Other studies have confirmed this. Indians have migrated and settled in the Gulf States in general long before the 1970s (Al-Qasimi, 1986 and Seccombe, 1983).

Moreover, the finding that about 39 per cent of the migrants came to the U.A.E. between 1985 and 1988 seems to indicate that the flow of Keralites to the country's labour market continued even after the steep fall in oil prices that started in 1985 and continued through 1986, and the subsequent restrictions on spending and wages.

The distribution of migrants by year of migration and religious affiliation shows, however, that none of the Christian migrants in the community under investigation seems to have come to the U.A.E. before 1976. The earliest years of migration for the Hindus and Muslims were 1977 and 1966 respectively. Thus, all the migrants in the community under study who came before 1972 were Muslims. This finding supports the general assumption that Christians, and to a lesser degree Hindus, migrated from Kerala to the Gulf countries much later than the Muslims did (Gulati, 1986:194) and more often with the help of a Muslim friend, as will subsequently be seen in the analysis of the process of migration in Chapter 4.

The age composition of the migrants does not seem to have undergone any consistent change over the years. It is observed, however, that those in the age group of less than 20 years have migrated in larger numbers in recent years. They formed 31.7 and 37.2 per cent in 1987 and 1988 respectively.

TABLE 3.12(b)
MIGRANTS BY YEAR OF MIGRATION AND
MARITAL STATUS (%)

YEAR OF MIGRATION	MARITAL STATUS			TOTAL	
	SINGLE	MARRIED	DIVORCED	%	n.
1966	62.5	37.5	—	100	8
1967	60.0	40.0	—	100	10
1968	—	100	—	100	4
1969	16.7	83.3	—	100	6
1970	25.0	75.0	—	100	8
1971	44.4	55.6	—	100	9
1972	23.1	76.9	—	100	13
1973	20.0	80.0	—	100	25
1974	18.2	81.8	—	100	33
1975	46.7	53.3	—	100	30
1976	57.6	42.4	—	100	33
1977	48.5	51.5	—	100	33
1978	73.7	26.3	—	100	57
1979	62.0	38.0	—	100	50
1980	76.7	20.9	2.3	100	43
1981	41.0	59.0	—	100	39
1982	21.9	73.2	4.9	100	41
1983	59.2	40.8	—	100	98
1984	52.3	46.5	1.2	100	86
1985	51.9	48.1	—	100	79
1986	51.4	48.6	—	100	70
1987	78.8	21.2	—	100	104
1988	81.8	18.2	—	100	148
TOTAL %	57.9	41.7	0.4	100	
TOTAL n.	595	428	4		1027

The marital status of the migrants showed some changes over the years as the data in Table 3.12(b) indicate. There were more unmarried than married persons among those who migrated before 1968. The pattern skewed towards the married starting from 1968 though 1975, after which the ratio began to vary all the way to 1982. From 1983 on the unmarried formed a large majority. Their proportion was as high as 81.8 per cent in 1988.

Looking at the migrants' activity status through the years, one finds that the proportion of the unemployed has varied from time to time, showing the kind of pattern observed above. Nevertheless, their proportion has never been lower than 20 per cent in any single year, and from 1978 to 1988 it has been rising except for the years 1981 and 1982, reaching about 92.3 per cent in 1987.

2.13 Number of Years in the U.A.E.

Although the Keralite migrants in the in depth case study did not express an intention to stay in the U.A.E. permanently, they did, however, express a desire to stay in the host country as long as possible and quite a few of them, mainly Muslims, said they would not consider returning to Kerala unless they were forced to do so. When they were asked what would they do if they were forced to leave the country they said they would consider going to another state in the Gulf. Nonetheless, the data in the following table show that about 5.7 per cent of the migrants in the community under investigation had been living in the U.A.E.

for more than 15 years; all of these except one were Muslims. The majority (about 57 per cent) of the migrants under consideration had been living in the U.A.E. for not more than five years and 37.4 per cent had been in the country for a period of 6 to 15 years. Looking at each religious group, however, one finds that slightly less than 67 per cent of the Hindu group had been living in the host country for five years or less. The corresponding percentages for the Muslims and Christians were 55.6 and 50 per cent respectively. None of the Christians and only a very small percentage (0.7 per cent) of the Hindus had been living in the U.A.E. for more than 15 years, compared to 6.4 per cent of the Muslim group. It seems that Muslims are more likely to stay in the U.A.E. for a longer period.

TABLE 3.13
MIGRANTS BY NUMBER OF YEARS IN THE U.A.E.
AND RELIGION (%)

NUMBER OF YEARS IN THE U.A.E.	RELIGIOUS GROUPS			TOTAL	
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	%	n.
LESS THAN A YEAR	18.3	13.5	—	17.4	179
1 TO 5 YEARS	37.3	53.4	50.0	39.5	406
6 TO 10 YEARS	22.1	22.6	33.3	22.3	229
11 TO 15 YEARS	15.9	9.8	16.7	15.1	155
16 TO 20 YEARS	4.4	0.7	—	3.9	40
OVER 20 YEARS	2.0	—	—	1.8	18
TOTAL %	100	100	100	100	
n.	882	133	12		1027

3. The Households

3.1 Size of Households

In this part an attempt will be made to discuss the socio-economic characteristics of the migrants' households left behind in Kerala. Generally speaking, Keralite migrants in the community under study came from households of fairly large size. The average was 9.36 member (about 4.51 males and 4.85 females), much larger than the average size of the general population in Kerala, which is about 6.0 (Nair, 1986:38). As Table 3.14(a) shows, slightly more than 55 per cent of the migrants came from households with 6 to 10 members. Slightly less than 32 per cent came from large size households of 11 members or more and 9.6 per cent belonged to households of 16 members or more. Only 12.8 per cent came from small size households of 5 members or less.

TABLE 3.14(a)
SIZE OF HOUSEHOLDS ON THE
EVE OF MIGRATION

HOUSEHOLD SIZE (NUMBER OF MEMBERS)	HOUSEHOLDS	%
5 OR LESS	131	12.8
6 TO 10 MEMBERS	568	55.3
11 TO 15 MEMBERS	229	22.3
16 OR MORE	99	9.6
TOTAL	1027	100

The households of the Christian migrants were those with the smallest average size of 6.42 members, whereas the Muslims' households belonged to those with the largest average size of 9.72 members and the Hindus' households were somewhere in between with about 8.6 members. As the data in Table 3.14(b) indicate, little more than one tenth only of the Muslim migrants came from households of the size of 5 members or less, compared to slightly less than one fourth and a little less than three fifths of the Hindus and Christians respectively. The great majority (about 56 per cent) of the Muslims came from households of 6 to 10 members and nearly 34 per cent came from large households of 11 members or more. The corresponding percentages for Hindus were 54.1 and 21 per cent respectively. None of the Christians came from a large household of 11 members or more.

TABLE 3.14(b)
MIGRANTS' HOUSEHOLDS BY SIZE AND
RELIGIOUS GROUP (%)

HOUSEHOLD SIZE (NUMBER OF MEMBERS)	RELIGIOUS GROUPS		
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN
5 OR LESS	10.3	24.	58.3
6 TO 10 MEMBERS	55.7	54.1	41.7
11 TO 15 MEMBERS	23.5	16.5	—
16 OR MORE MEMBERS	10.5	4.5	—
TOTAL* %	100	100	100
n.	882	133	12

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

3.2 Members of the Households

It was observed that the numbers of females were in excess of the numbers of males in the population of the migrants' households. The proportions of males and females were 48.2 and 51.8 per cent respectively. In other words, there were 107 women on the average for 100 men. This observation was neither surprising nor unexpected. Since 1901 the state of Kerala has been the only state in India where the female population has been in excess of the male population. This is most likely because of the life expectancy for males has been smaller than that for females since 1931. In 1979, life expectancy for males was 63.82 and for females was 66.91 (Sankaranarayanan and Karunakaran, 1985:16-8). The average number of children of school-age (5 to 14 years) per household was 1.65.

3.3 Employment Situation in the Households

On the eve of migration only 19.2 per cent of the households' population aged 15 years or older were employed. Nearly 36 percent of the adult male population, but about 3.3 per cent only of the female population, were employed. Of the employed adult males, about 55 per cent were working in the Gulf states or in other States within India. The average employed members per household came to about 1.48. The average number of members wholly dependent on the head of the household came to 7.88. As was shown earlier, about 67.3 per cent of the migrants came from this dependent group.

3.4 Economic Status of Households

In an attempt to establish a broad picture of the economic status of the migrants' households, the extent of land owned, the value of total assets and the annual income of each household were examined. Both physical and financial assets were included. Thus, the migrants were asked to give the size of the cultivated and/or cultivable land owned, and its value, the value of the livestock and poultry, buildings, jewellery, vehicles and other machinery and so forth. The value of the households' assets was the value at the time of the study as reported by the migrants themselves.

The figures reported here may not possess a high degree of reliability for several reasons, not the least of which was that the investigator was unable to check the quality and value of the assets except in a very few cases. Nonetheless, since the attempt here is to obtain a broad picture of the economic level of the Keralite migrants as they themselves see it and not to quantify precisely the value of their assets, there is no reason to believe that such information is not sufficient for the task.

3.4.1 LAND

As the data in Table 3.14(c) show, slightly over 87 per cent of the households possessed one acre or less of cultivated and/or cultivable land and about 15 per cent owned no land at all. Migrants' households with between one

and two acres of land formed 7.7 per cent and only 5.3 per cent of the households possessed more than two acres of land.

TABLE 3.14(c)

HOUSEHOLDS BY EXTENT OF CULTIVATED AND/OR
CULTIVABLE LAND OWNED ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION

EXTENT OF LAND (In ACRES)	HOUSE- HOLDES	%
NO LAND	153	14.9
UP TO 0.5 ACRE	513	50.0
0.6 TO 1 ACRE	229	22.3
1.1 TO 2 ACRES	79	7.7
2.1 TO 3 ACRES	16	1.5
3.1 TO 5 ACRES	16	1.5
5.1 TO 10 ACRES	10	1.0
OVER 10 ACRES	11	1.1
TOTAL	1027	100

Looking at different religious groups, one finds some differences in the matter of extent of land owned. As Table 3.14(d) shows the proportion of households with no land was found to be the highest among the Muslims (about 17 per cent), higher among the Christians (about 8 per cent) and the lowest among the Hindus (4.5 per cent). More households with two acres of land or less were found among the Hindus than among Muslims and Christians. The corresponding percentage were 80.5, 79.9 and 75.0 respectively. None of the Christians' households were found among those with more than three acres of cultivated land, whereas about 10.6 per

cent of the Hindus' and 2.6 per cent of the Muslims' households belonged to this category.

TABLE 3.14(d)

EXTENT OF CULTIVATED AND/OR CULTIVABLE LAND
OWNED BY HOUSEHOLDS ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION
BY RELIGIOUS GROUP (%)

EXTENT OF LAND (In acres)	RELIGIOUS GROUPS		
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN
NO LAND	16.6	4.5	8.3
UP TO 0.5 ACRE	50.7	47.4	25.0
0.6 TO 1 ACRE	22.1	23.3	25.0
1.1 TO 2 ACRES	7.1	9.8	25.0
2.1 TO 3 ACRES	0.9	4.5	16.7
3.1 TO 5 ACRES	1.0	5.3	—
5.1 TO 10 ACRES	0.7	3.0	—
OVER 10 ACRES	0.9	2.2	—
TOTAL %	100	100	100
n.	882	133	12

Since a household with less than 2.5 acres of cultivated land is considered poor according to the standard in Kerala State (Nair, 1986:39), and the great majority of the migrants' households were rural, depending for their income on agriculture and agricultural activities, it is reasonable to conclude that about 95 per cent of the migrants' households were poor.

3.4.2 Total Assets

Any global economic categorization of the migrants' households would be arbitrary, since the assets include items of different kinds with varied income-generating

capacities. But, to obtain a rough idea of the economic situation of the migrants' households on the eve of migration, households were classified into four categories. Those whose total value of assets was 50 thousand Rupees or less were labelled "low"; those whose value of assets was in the range of 51 to 100 thousand Rupees were categorized as "lower middle"; households with assets valued in the range of 101 to 200 thousand were labelled "upper middle", and households whose assets were valued in the range of more than 200 thousand Rupees were considered "high".

TABLE 3.14(e)
HOUSEHOLDS BY VALUE OF TOTAL ASSETS
ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION

VALUE OF ASSETS (In 1,000 Rupees)	HOUSE- HOLDS	%
Rs. 50 OR LESS (LOW)	554	53.9
Rs. 51 TO Rs. 100 (LOWER MIDDLE)	294	28.6
Rs. 101 TO Rs. 200 (UPPER MIDDLE)	112	10.9
MORE THAN RS 200 (HIGH)	67	6.5
TOTAL*	1027	100

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

Looking at the distribution of the migrants' households in terms of value of assets as categorized above (Table 3.14(e)), one finds that about 54 per cent of them belonged on the eve of migration of their members to the low asset group. By current standards in Kerala those would be poor

households. About 39.5 per cent fell into the lower middle and upper middle asset groups; 28.6 and 10.9 per cent respectively. Thus, the great majority of the migrants came from poor households by current standards in Kerala, whereas very few of them (6.5 per cent) belonged to highly affluent households - those with assets of a value of more than 200 thousand Rupees.

These findings differ significantly from the results of other studies of Kerala migrants. One study found to the contrary of the above observation, that almost three fifths of the sample households belonged to the affluent groups (Nair, 1986:42). This apparent contradictory observation probably resulted first, from the fact that Nair's study covered skilled and professional migrants as well as unskilled and semiskilled, whereas the present study deals mainly with migrants who are engaged in semiskilled and unskilled jobs. Second, Nair's research was concerned with returned migrants in Kerala, and as he observed, there was a tendency on the part of the returned migrants to report a higher economic condition of households on the eve of migration to minimize the differences in the economic level of households between the time of migration and the time when they returned.

In the matter of asset values, there exist some differences between religious groups. As Table 3.14(f) shows, the great majority of Christians' households (about 58 per cent) belonged to the higher asset groups. The

corresponding percentages for Hindus' and Muslims' households were 33 and 14.5 per cent respectively.

TABLE 3.14(f)
HOUSEHOLDS BY VALUE OF ASSETS ON THE EVE
OF MIGRATION BY RELIGIOUS GROUP (%)

VALUE OF ASSETS (In Rs. 1,000)	RELIGIOUS GROUPS		
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN
Rs 50 OR LESS (LOW)	57.8	32.3	8.3
Rs. 51 TO Rs. 100 (LOWER MIDDLE)	27.7	34.6	33.3
Rs.101 TO Rs. 200 (UPPER MIDDLE)	9.3	19.5	33.3
MORE THAN Rs. 200 (HIGH)	5.2	13.5	25.0
TOTAL*	%	100	100
	n.	882	133

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

3.4.3 Annual Income

In terms of annual income, migrants' households were classified into four categories: Low (5,000 Rupees or less), Middle (6,000 to 15,000 Rupees), Upper Middle (16,000 to 30,000 Rupees) and High (more than 30,000 Rupees).

As the data in Table 3.14(g) show, the migrants came from poor households with annual income of 5,000 Rupees or less as well as from households with annual earning as high as more than 30,000 Rupees. A little more than 37 per cent of the migrants' households on the eve of migration of their members belonged to those with annual income of 5,000 Rupees

or less, which is, according to Kerala standards considered poor income. Only 4.5 per cent of the households came under those of high income group of more than 30,000 Rupees and a little more than 58 per cent fell in the middle ranges.

TABLE 3.14(g)
HOUSEHOLDS BY ANNUAL INCOME ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION

ANNUAL INCOME (In Rs. 1,000)	HOUSE- HOLDS	%
Rs. 5 OR LESS (LOW)	381	37.1
Rs. 6 TO Rs. 15 (LOWER MIDDLE)	407	39.6
Rs. 16 TO Rs. 30 (UPPER MIDDLE)	193	18.8
MORE THAN RS 30 (HIGH)	46	4.5
TOTAL	1027	100

Looking at the different religious group in terms of households' annual income (Table 3.14(h)) one finds a pattern similar to that observed earlier in respect of value of assets. Christians' households again kept their high position in the higher brackets with 66.7 per cent, followed by the Hindus' households with 28.6 per cent. The proportion of Muslims' households in the higher brackets formed slightly less than 22 per cent. If, however, one considers the low group, one observes that the 40.6 percent of the Hindus' households fell in this category compared to about

37 per cent of the Muslims' households. None of the Christians' households was found in this category.

TABLE 3.14(h)
HOUSEHOLDS' ANNUAL INCOME ON THE EVE
OF MIGRATION BY RELIGIOUS GROUP (%)

ANNUAL IMCOME (In Rs. 1,000)	RELIGIOUS GROUPS		
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN
Rs 5 OR LESS (LOW)	37.1	40.6	—
Rs. 6 TO Rs. 15 (LOWER MIDDLE)	41.0	30.8	33.3
Rs. 16 TO Rs. 30 (UPPER MIDDLE)	18.6	17.3	50.0
MORE THAN Rs. 30 (HIGH)	3.3	11.3	16.7
TOTAL	%	100	100
	n.	882	133
		133	12

TABLE 3.14(i)
HOUSEHOLDS BY NUMBER OF MEMBERS WORKING
IN THE GULF ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION

NUMBER OF MEMBERS IN THE GULF	NUMBERS NUMBERS	%
NONE	232	22.6
1 MEMBERS	506	49.3
2 MEMBERS	212	20.6
3 MEMBERS	55	5.4
4 MEMBERS	22	2.1
TOTAL	1027	100

3.5 Households' Members Working in the Gulf

At the time of first migration, about 77 per cent of the interviewed migrants had one or more members of their households working in the Arab countries of the Gulf. As the data in Table 3.14(i) indicate, although a large proportion (slightly more than 49 per cent) of the households had only one of their members working in the Gulf states, quite a few of them (slightly more than 28 per cent) had two members or more in these Countries.

TABLE 3.14(j)

HOUSEHOLDS BY NUMBER OF MEMBERS WORKING IN
THE GULF ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION BY RELIGION (%)

NUMBER OF MEMBERS IN THE GULF	RELIGIOUS GROUPS		
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN
NONE	14.2	73.7	75.0
1 MEMBERS	53.8	21.0	25.0
2 MEMBERS	23.6	3.0	—
3 MEMBERS	5.9	2.3	—
4 MEMBERS	2.5	—	—
TOTAL %	100	100	100
n.	882	133	12

As Table 3.14(j) shows, the proportion of households with one or more of its members working in the Gulf states was found to be the highest among Muslims; about 85.8 per cent. The corresponding percentages for Christians' and Hindus' households were 25 and 26.3 per cent respectively. None of the Christian households had more than one member

working in the Gulf states. Only 3.0 and 2.3 per cent of the Hindu households had two and three members respectively working in the Gulf countries. The corresponding percentages for the Muslim households were 23.6 and 5.9 per cent. Moreover, some of the Muslim households (2.5 per cent) had four members in the Gulf states.

4. Summary

This chapter attempted to establish a profile of the Keralite migrants and their households left behind in Kerala on the eve of migration. The first part examined the socio-economic characteristics of the migrants and the second part discussed their households.

Almost all of the migrants (about 98 per cent), at the time of first migration, had been young, below 36 years of age and slightly more than 61 per cent were 25 years old or younger. Slightly less than three fifths had been unmarried but a few years after migration, about 47 per cent of them got married. The general impression prevalent among the U.A.E. locals and some writers, that the great majority of the Asian migrants are illiterate, was not borne out by the Keralite immigrants under study, all of whom had been literate. The great majority (88 per cent) of them, however, had no vocational training whatsoever, nearly 50 per cent had no work experience at all and about 31 per cent had been unskilled workers. More than 67 per cent of the migrants had been dependents, almost 65 per cent had been unemployed, more than half had not had any earnings at all and the

earnings of more than 37 per cent had been very low, i.e. 500 Rupees or less.

The great majority (about 86 per cent) of the migrants were Muslims. Hindus and Christians formed 13 and 1.2 per cent respectively. Muslims were less educated and had less vocational training than Christian and Hindu migrants. Only slightly more than two tenths of the Muslims had some kind of work experience, compared to more than three fifths of the Hindus. All of the Christian group had work experience of some kind. Slightly more than 30 per cent of the Muslims, nearly 70 per cent of the Hindus and about 92 per cent of the Christians had been employed on the eve of migration. In terms of earnings, the Christian group were found to be better off; more than 58 per cent of them had earnings of more than 500 Rupees. The corresponding percentages for the Hindus and the Muslims were 14.3 and 10.6 per cent respectively. The proportion of those with no earnings formed about 55, 28 and 17 per cent of the Muslims, the Hindus and the Christians respectively.

Although Keralite migrants had come from all of the three regions of Kerala, the largest proportion (about 53 per cent) had come from the four northern districts. Muslims constituted the great majority of migrants from each of the ten districts. More than 81 per cent of the migrants had come from rural areas.

Migration from Kerala to the U.A.E. started long before the formidable increase in oil prices and continued even

after the sharp fall in the prices. Immigrants in the community under consideration included persons who had come to the U.A.E. as early as 1966, as well as those who came in 1988. Christian and Hindu immigrants had come to the U.A.E much later than Muslims. The age composition and the marital status of the immigrants has fluctuated over the years, although young (under 20 years old), unmarried and unemployed immigrants have come to the U.A.E. in larger numbers in recent years.

Muslims were more likely to stay in the host country of the U.A.E. for a longer period than Hindu and Christian immigrants. Almost all of the immigrants explicitly expressed a desire to stay in the U.A.E. as long as possible and quite a few said they would not consider going back to Kerala unless they were forced to do so. If they had to leave the U.A.E. they would consider going to another country in the Gulf.

The immigrants in the community under consideration had come from households much larger than the average size in Kerala. About one third of them had come from households of 11 members or more and nearly one tenth had come from very large households of more than 15 members. Muslims were more likely to have come from large size households than Hindus and Christians. The average number of employed members per household was 1.48, whereas that of members wholly dependent on the head of household was 7.88.

Since a household with less than 2.5 acres of cultivable land is considered poor in Kerala, the great majority (95 per cent) of the immigrants had come from poor households which owned no or very small plots of land, although more Hindus than Muslim households owned more than three acres. Moreover, about 83 per cent of the migrants' households owned total assets of 100,000 Rupees or less. More than 58 percent of the Christian households, however, belonged to the higher asset groups of more than 100,000 Rupees. Examining the economic status of the migrants' households according to annual income one finds that only slightly less than 63 per cent had an annual income of more than 5,000 Rupees; a factor which probably had enabled these households to send one or two of their members to the Gulf states. Only a little over 37 per cent of the households had an annual income of 5,000 Rupees or less. In terms of annual income, Christian households were better off than others.

At the time of first migration, about 58 per cent of the interviewed migrants had one or more members of their households working in the Arab countries of the Gulf but this was mainly due to the fact that nearly 86 per cent of the Muslim households had one or more of their members working in the Gulf countries. None of the Christian households had more than one of its members in the Gulf whereas only 5.3 per cent of the Hindu and slightly more than 32 per cent of the Muslim households had two or more of their members working in these countries.

NOTES

1. See for example Arnold and Shah, (ed.), 1986, pp. 3-16, Abbasi and Irfan, 1986, pp. 177-193.
2. See for example Al-faris, 1983, pp. 31-33.
3. This is probably because the official data in the U.A.E. and other Gulf States is presented in terms of aggregate population (citizens, Asian, etc.), hence the significant variations between, for example, Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are usually overlooked.
4. See also Prakash, 1978, pp. 1107-1111.
5. The interview was one of the 65 interviews in the in depth case studies conducted by the researcher in Abu Dhabi during the field work.
6. This interview was conducted by the researcher in Abu Dhabi during the visit of Dr. C.K. Kareem to the U.A.E..
7. Ibid.
8. This finding is not dissimilar from the findings of other studies. see for example Government of Kerala, 1987:5.
9. See for example Demery, 1986, pp. 17-46 and Stahl, 1986, pp. 81-100.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROCESS OF MIGRATION: THE PRE-MIGRATION PHASE

1 Introduction

Migration and its determinants have been important issues in various disciplines such as demography, psychology, economics, sociology and geography. Nonetheless, each of these disciplines deals with the causes of migration from a single point of view, in terms of push - pull factors, age, sex, educational attainment, income differentials and so on and so forth. Although the explanation offered by each point of view adds to our understanding of the determinants of this complex phenomenon, nonetheless, it remains a partial explanation of determinants. In this study, the discussion will be based not on a single point of view, but on an inter-disciplinary understanding of the determinants of migration. In an attempt to broaden the perspective of analysis, this study seeks to collaborate the migrants' own accounts of determinants as "volitional individuals" who are not passive reactors to circumstances beyond their understanding and their control (Kasdan, 1970:5), with the various social, economic and political determinants within the context from which the migrants have come⁽¹⁾.

In the preceding chapters the specific context of Kerala, together with the various historical, cultural and economic relations between Kerala and the U.A.E., were outlined and some of the socioeconomic characteristics of the migrants and their households in Kerala were analysed. In the following pages we will turn to the migrants themselves in an attempt to outline how migrants perceived the reasons for migration, how the decision to migrate was made and how the decision, once made, eventually materialized. Here we may hasten to say that the "real" reason or reasons for migration are very difficult to ascertain for various reasons, not the least of which are the tendency of people to reconstruct and rationalize their motivations after they have already migrated, and that people's goals and aspirations often change over time. Nonetheless, if one is to depend on the responses of the migrants themselves, one must assume that the reasons for migration as stated by the migrants are real reasons and are important for the understanding of the determinants of migration. In discussing the process of migration in the pre-migration phase, an attempt will also be made to address and identify the role of the family and kinship networks in this process.

2. Reasons for Migration as the Migrants Perceived Them

In Chapter 3 some aspects of the social and economic status of the migrants and their households were discussed. It was noticed that migrants from Kerala to the U.A.E.

covered by this study came from various segments of the population within Kerala. Although the great majority of them were Muslims, of low educational level, unskilled, unemployed and economically backward, a few of them were found to be highly educated, skilled and economically well off. In this part an attempt will be made to uncover the reason or reasons for migration as the migrants themselves saw them. The migrants were requested to state the most important reason for migration.

The data in Table 4.1(a) show that the most important reason for migration reported by 61 per cent of the migrants was lack of employment opportunities in Kerala. About 17.8 per cent claimed that they had migrated for the purpose of fulfilling family responsibilities and obligations such as marriage of their daughters or sisters, redemption of family debt and education of the children. Those who reported discharging family obligations as the most important reason for migration, often mentioned marriage of their daughters and/or sisters; very few of them talked about educating their children and even fewer had redemption of family debt in mind (such debts, surprisingly enough, resulted largely from previous marriages of daughters or sisters). Accumulation of savings to raise the standard of living back home was reported as the main reason for seeking employment abroad by 15.7 per cent of the migrants. It seems that capital accumulation for the purpose of productive investments was not an important reason for migration except for a small proportion of migrants, forming only 5.5 per

cent. These were mainly migrants who had been self employed in Kerala and wanted to develop their businesses on their return back home.

TABLE 4.1(a)
REASONS FOR MIGRATION AS PERCEIVED
BY THE MIGRANTS

REASON FOR MIGRATION	NUMBERS	%
Lack of employment opportunity at home	627	61.0
Discharge of family responsibility	183	17.8
Accumulation of savings to raise living standards	161	15.7
Capital accumulation for investment purposes	56	5.5
TOTAL	1027	100

Although unemployment was the most important reason for migration, given by a large proportion of the migrants, this largely reflected the fact that the great majority (about 65.8 per cent) of Muslim migrants reported that this was the main reason for them to seek a job abroad (see Table 4.1(b)). The corresponding percentages for Hindus and Christians were 34.6 and 8.3 per cent. The proportions of those who reported a desire to raise the standard of living back home and those who gave accumulation of capital for investment as the most important reasons for seeking employment abroad were highest among Christians (50 and 33.3

per cent respectively), higher among Hindus (36.8 and 10.5 per cent respectively) and lowest among Muslims (12 and 4.3 per cent respectively). Discharge of family responsibilities and obligations were given as the most important reason for migration by 18.1 per cent of the Hindus compared to 17.9 and 8.3 per cent of the Muslim and Christian migrants respectively.

TABLE 4.1(b)
REASONS FOR MIGRATION AS PERCEIVED
BY THE MIGRANTS BY RELIGION (%)

REASON FOR MIGRATION	RELIGIOUS GROUPS			TOTAL
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	
Lack of employment opportunity at home	65.8	34.6	8.3	61.0
Discharge of family responsibility	17.9	18.0	8.3	17.8
Accumulation of savings to raise living standards	12.0	36.8	50.0	15.7
Capital accumulation for investment purposes	4.3	10.5	33.3	5.5
TOTAL*	%	100	100	100
	n.	882	133	1027

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

Educational attainment of the people in the country of origin seems to interact with other factors in such a way as to affect people differently in their decision to seek employment abroad. Looking at the most important reason reported by the migrants according to their level of educational attainment, one finds some interesting

observations (see Table 4.1(c)). Lack of employment opportunities was given as the most important reason for seeking employment in the U.A.E. by 71.6 per cent of those with primary level of education. The proportion decreased significantly as educational level increased. Among those with secondary school level this proportion was 47 per cent, among those college educated, but without any degree, it was 23.5 and among the degree holders, this proportion reached its lowest of about 18.2 per cent only. This observation seems to indicate that although the unemployment situation in Kerala is generally acute, it is more severe among those with a low level of education (see Chapter 2).

TABLE 4.1(c)

**REASONS FOR MIGRATION AS PERCEIVED
BY THE MIGRANTS BY EDUCATION (%)**

REASON FOR MIGRATION	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL				TOTAL
	P.S.	S.S.	P.D.	D.H.	
Lack of employment opportunity at home	71.6	47.0	23.5	18.2	61.0
Discharge of family responsibility	20.5	12.6	20.6	18.2	17.8
Accumulation of savings to raise living standards	5.2	32.1	35.3	36.4	15.7
Capital accumulation for investment purposes	2.7	8.3	20.6	27.3	5.5
TOTAL* %	100	100	100	100	100
n.	633	349	34	11	1027

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

Note :

P.S. = Primary school
S.S. = Secondary school
P.D. = Pre-degree
D.H. = Degree holders

Contrary to this observation was that regarding accumulation of saving to reach and maintain a higher standard of living. The proportion of those who saw this reason as the most important one seems to increase with level of education. While the proportion was only 5.2 per cent among those with primary level of education, it rose to slightly over 32 per cent among those with secondary level, to a little more than 35 per cent among the college educated with no degree and to 36.4 among the degree holders. This observation seems to indicate that migrants' aspirations to improve their situation and reach and maintain a higher standard of living for themselves and their families is positively related to the level of educational attainment. The higher a person's level of education is, the greater are his or her aspirations to achieve a better living standard.

Similarly, level of education seems to be directly related to the awareness of the importance of investment as a way of solving one's economic problems and maintaining a continuous income once a migrant returned home. It was observed that the proportion of those who gave capital accumulation for the purpose of investment as the main reason for seeking employment in the Gulf increased with educational level. This proportion was the lowest among those at primary school level and the highest among the degree holders. Discharging family obligations (marrying of a daughter or sister, providing better education for children or younger brothers and other household responsibilities) however, did not show any regular pattern

as far as educational level was concerned, although the reason for this is not obvious.

TABLE 4.1(d)

REASONS FOR MIGRATION AS PERCEIVED BY THE
MIGRANTS ACCORDING TO MONTHLY EARNINGS (%)

REASON FOR MIGRATION	MONTHLY EARNINGS IN RUPEES					
	NO EARN- ING	LESS THAN 100	100 TO 250	251 TO 500	501 TO 1000	1000 OR MORE
Lack of employment opportunity at home	81.5	76.0	58.6	29.8	11.4	20.4
Discharge of family responsibility	7.2	16.0	29.6	39.2	21.4	12.2
Savings to raise living standards	10.9	8.0	11.8	29.8	31.4	12.2
Capital accumulation for investment	0.4	—	—	1.1	35.7	55.1
TOTAL*	%	100	100	100	100	100
	n.	525	50	152	181	70

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

The income level of the migrants could be another factor affecting the decision to seek employment abroad. It was observed that the proportion of migrants who reported lack of employment opportunities at home as the most important reason for seeking a job abroad increased as the level of income decreased. As the data in Table 4.1(d) illustrate, this proportion reached its highest (about 81.5 percent) among the non-earners and as one moved to a higher level of income it decreased to reach its lowest level (about 11.4 percent) among those whose earnings were between 501 and 1000 Rupees. However, for no obvious reason, the

proportion increased once again among those with an earning level of more than 1,000 Rupees.

Generally speaking, the proportion of those who saw accumulation of savings to raise the standard of living as the most important reason and those who sought employment abroad to accumulate capital for investment purposes seemed to increase with level of income. This positive relationship, however, is more obvious in the latter case (see Table 4.1(d)). Discharging family obligations and responsibilities as the most important reason for seeking employment abroad did not show any consistent pattern with level of income.

TABLE 4.1(e)

**REASONS FOR MIGRATION AS PERCEIVED BY THE
MIGRANTS BY THE HOUSEHOLDS' ANNUAL INCOME (%)**

REASON FOR MIGRATION	HOUSEHOLDS' ANNUAL INCOME			
	LOW	LOWER MIDDLE	UPPER MIDDLE	HIGH
Lack of employment opportunity at home	60.1	60.2	67.9	47.8
Discharge of family responsibility	17.6	21.6	9.3	21.7
Savings to raise living standards	16.8	13.0	16.6	26.1
Capital accumulation for investment	5.5	5.2	6.2	4.3
TOTAL %	100	100	100	100
n.	381	407	193	46

Note :

LOW = Less than 5,000 Rupees
 LOWER MIDDLE = From 5,000 to 15,000 Rupees
 UPPER MIDDLE = From 15,100 to 30,000 Rupees
 HIGH = More than 30,000 Rupees

Although the annual income of the household is a very important factor, at least in terms of the ability of the household to finance the initial cost of migration, reasons for migration did not vary significantly with the level of households' annual income (see Table 4.1(e)). This probably suggests that individual earnings are more important in migration decision making than the household's annual income.

While these findings suggest that economic problems in Kerala were overridingly important and constituted strong push factors, they were usually tied in with non-economic problems. The most widely accepted framework for analysing determinants of migration is the "push-pull" model in which migration determinants are often portrayed as purely economic and are given an overriding importance (Bogue, 1959:499-50; Shryock, 1964:59; Lee, 1966:47-57).

Following this approach, Mohieldine,(1980) asserts that the emigration of school teachers and university professors to the Gulf states was highly motivated by differences in salaries. He noticed that in 1980 a full professor on secondment to Kuwait earned about twelve times his salary in Egypt. Thus, the earnings of a full professor in four years of secondment in Kuwait would be equal to his earning in 18 years in Egypt. Such huge differences in earnings, according to Mohieldine, encouraged many Egyptian professors and school teachers to seek employment in Kuwait. Moreover, once they are in Kuwait they usually stay there for more than the

standard four years secondment allowed by the Egyptian Government, even if they have to resign from their jobs back home⁽²⁾. Such framework portrays migrants as economic actors; their aspirations for material benefits force them to leave their traditional place in search of economic gains and easy wealth (Engelbrektsson, 1978:15). Migration can be considered as economic only in the sense that migrants leave their place of origin and go to another place where labour shortages enable them to find a livelihood and income to improve the living standards and status of the rest of the family members left behind (Dahya, 1972 and Pettigrew, 1972)

As will be discussed later, remittances sent by the Keralite migrants were used to finance marriages of daughters and sisters, to pay off debts incurred to finance the initial cost of migration and to finance the migration of another relative. Then, remittances were used to extend the family's landholdings, to build a big modern house and/or to establish some kind of business. In some cases migration was viewed as a way of achieving independence from the extended and joint families. Further insights into the determinants of migration were obtained from the in-depth case studies. These additional observations suggest that migration decisions are usually complex and involve many interrelated factors.

It was observed in the preceding chapter that only 15.6 per cent of the migrants were found to be heads of households when they first came to the U.A.E. and the rest

were either other income-earning household members or absolute dependants. This observation suggests that the migration decision was not totally governed by personal factors. The household as a whole seemed to influence these decisions.

Although the great majority of the respondents reported that lack of employment opportunities at home was the most important reason for them to seek employment abroad, they nonetheless had their families' and households' problems in mind. The importance of the household unit in the decision making became clear from the comments made by the migrants. Personal aspirations, though very important, came second to fulfilling duties towards the household as a whole.

Abbas, 25 years old, came to the U.A.E. in 1984. He left school after completing 10 years of schooling and joined his elder brother who was working in the State of Madras in a restaurant owned by one of their fellow villagers. Abbas is the fourth child of eight children; three boys and five girls. He commented on his migration in the following words:

We lived in a three room house. My father owned little more than one acre of coconut land, but he had to give a large part of it in dowries to attract good bridegrooms for my two elder sisters. My brother, Kabeer, kept sending money from Madras where he works. Soon after the marriage of my sisters Kabeer also got married, just after the renewal of the roof of our house. The old coconut leaves were replaced by new ones. This happened in the same year I left school.

Soon after Kabeer's marriage I was told that I had to go to Madras with my brother and

work with him as he had arranged a job for me in the same restaurant. "The wages are not so bad", my brother said. Accommodation and food would be provided so I would not need to spend much of my salary which I would send to my father every month. My brother is married now and he wanted to build a new room for his new bride. Money was needed, not only to supplement the household's income but also to save the dowry for my other three sisters who soon will be marriageable. One year later my eldest sister's husband managed to go to Abu Dhabi where he worked for the army. My parents approached him through my sister to help me get to Abu Dhabi. He promised to help, but he could not guarantee finding a job for me. He said that the situation in Abu Dhabi is getting tight nowadays. Moreover, a large sum of money was needed, including about 4,000 Rupees for the air ticket and the rest for the visa which he had to buy in Abu Dhabi. He offered to pay for the visa and when I found a job there I would pay him back. I received the visa six months after he went back. Thus I came to Abu Dhabi on March 1984. ... I worked in Abu Dhabi municipality for two years as a caretaker on a daily basis for a wage of 25 Derhams a day. Now I am working on a monthly basis. My salary increased to 1200 Derhams per month. I have already paid my sister's husband the five thousand Derhams which he paid for the visa. I spend three hundred Derhams for food and accommodation and send the rest to my father. One of my younger sisters got married now and one will marry in a few days. I am planning to save some money, enough to build a two bedroom house. I also want to help my younger brother, who has just passed his school-leaving certificate examination to go to college and be somebody. I still have another sister to think of. You know, having many daughters or sisters in a poor household is considered a great burden for the parents and brothers. In Kerala, marriage costs too much money and if one wants a 'good' bridegroom for his daughters or sisters he has to give away a large dowry.

Similar accounts about fulfilling one's duty towards his family were reported by 19 of the 65 migrants in the in depth study. Marriage of daughters or sisters was often mentioned by Muslims as well as by Hindus and Christians as one of the reasons motivating them to seek employment abroad. Gopy, a Hindu migrant, was 37 years old; married for

eleven years now, he was an earning member in a household of twelve persons. He owned a small coffee shop which he had left to be run by his father when he came to the U.A.E.. With the help of a Muslim friend he had managed to come to Abu Dhabi in 1982. He explained why he decided to come to Abu Dhabi as follows:

I came to Abu Dhabi to work and save money. It is very hard to live in one place with your family in another, but also the living in Kerala is not an easy one. My family is composed of twelve persons. I have opened a coffee shop to increase the household's income. My elder brother works in north India, he also sends some money every month to my father but our income was barely enough to survive. I have two sisters. One was already married and one was not married yet. ... we decided that I should find a job in one of the Arab countries in the Gulf for two or three years; we thought this would solve all of our problems....

I have been sending some of my salary to my father and my wife, enough for day to day expenses. I also pay the college fees for my younger brother, Raj. I was able to pay all of the dowry needed for my sister. She is married now. I am also saving some of my income myself for the marriage of my two daughters and to build a house for my own family. There are four rooms in my parents' house now but these are not enough. I want to send my children to one of the technical schools for further education. I think with good technical education they will do better in life. My brother Raj will graduate as a civil engineer in a few months time. I am thinking of bringing him here if I can find a suitable job for him, at least until the employment exchange find a vacancy for him.

Seeking employment abroad was, for some of the married members of a household, a way of achieving independence from the extended or joint families. Although they continued to fulfil their duties towards their extended or joint families, quite a few migrants expressed their desire to

attain some kind of autonomy by way of building a house exclusively for their nuclear families.

Hassan was one of two married brothers living in their parents' household with other brothers and sisters. There were 15 members in the household, living in a five room house. Before coming to the U.A.E., Hassan had been working in Bombay. He would visit his family in Kerala every six months, spending two weeks there, then returning to Bombay. He expressed his motives for seeking employment in the Gulf in this way:

I want to build a small house in one corner of my parents' land. I was working in Bombay before I come to Abu Dhabi. Before I got married everything was alright. Two years after my marriage the problems started. Every time I came to Kerala on a holiday my wife received me with complaints. She was unhappy with the way everybody in the house treated her. One day I received a letter from my sister telling me that my wife had taken the children and gone to her parents' house. This was three weeks after I had left Kerala. I took one week emergency leave and went home. ... my wife and I decided that we should have our own house, but with my income I will never be able to build a separate house for us, so I thought that I must go to the Gulf if I was to build a house for my family. My wife was ready to mortgage her jewellery to provide the sum of money needed for the visa and the air ticket. ... I came to Dubai in 1970. In 1978 I managed to bring one of my two younger brothers and three years later my youngest brother joined us. I have already built a three bedroom house for me and my family. It has a large living room, large kitchen and two bathrooms. One of my daughters has got married and my children go to a good school, but I am tired now of living away from my family. I have been working here for 18 years. I am 46 years old now. I just want to save a little more, then I will go home for good and stay with my family...

As one of the reasons for migration, building a house was mentioned by all of the 65 migrants in the in depth study. Matthew, a 34 year old Christian, came to Abu Dhabi in 1981. He was the first born among two brothers and one sister. Before coming to Abu Dhabi he had been working as a cashier in his uncle's shop. He commented on his reasons for seeking employment abroad as follows:

My family and I live in Quilon. There were six people in my family, my parents, my grandmother, my brother, my sister and myself. My father works for the Indian army. He has a steady income from his salary and additional income also comes from our land. My parents wanted me and my brother and sister to go to college and have a good education, but this was very expensive. To have three children in the university and at the same time maintain a good standard of living was beyond what our income permits. What is more, my grandmother was very sick and my father spent quite a large sum of money every month on her medication. I also did not do very well at school, I took the school-leaving certificate examination twice but could not make it. I thought two of the family members going to the university is enough. So I worked in my uncle's shop as a salesman first, then as a cashier. During this time I learned typewriting.

During this time I also met a girl. She was one of two sisters living with their widowed mother. We fell in love and wanted to get married. She was training to be a nurse. When I talked about it with my parents they refused as she was a poor girl and she would not be able to bring with her a good dowry, ... but I insisted that if I was going to marry I would marry this girl. Finally, with the help of my uncle my parents unhappily agreed and we got married immediately after her graduation. We lived in my parents' house.

Although no one told us anything, my wife and I had the feeling that we were unwanted in my parents' house. It was a disturbing feeling; maybe it was because my wife did not bring in with her a valuable dowry or maybe because she had not found a job yet, or perhaps because my participation in the household income was not

enough. I really don't know. What I know was this feeling bothered us a lot and became more disturbing when my wife became pregnant. We wished we had our own house.

I discussed my feelings with my uncle. He suggested that I go to the Gulf, "You can easily find a job there with a good salary and your wife can work too as a nurse." When I told my wife about it she immediately approved the idea, and we sat there dreaming of our new house which going to the Gulf would make come true. We thought that working in the Gulf for two years or so would enable us to have our own house.

Well, my wife never made it to the Gulf but she found a nurse's job in a private hospital in Quilon. This is my eighth year in the U.A.E. now and I have not completed building our house yet. I have two children to think about too. I don't want them to be like their father. I will try to have them get the best education and to be somebody in their life.

One important incentive to migration for many migrants, particularly among those who came to Abu Dhabi in the later years, was the significant accomplishments of the earlier migrants who were apparently very successful in their venture. Quite a few of the migrants who came to the U.A.E. after 1980 were ready to pay as much as 30,000 Indian Rupees to come to the Gulf countries. Moheen was 23 years old when he came to the U.A.E. in 1984. He commented on how the 'dreamland' of the Gulf attracted him :

The great wealth brought by the 'Gulf people' changed the face of my village beyond recognition. Modern houses have been built, beautiful villas have replaced the old mud huts, reinforced concrete bungalows have taken over the old cottages. You see, all of these people were like us, just as poor as we are, but suddenly they became very rich just because one or two of the family went to the Gulf. They replaced their old houses which were not so much different from ours with two storey villas fully equipped with electricity and water supplies. They had radio and television sets, wore beautiful imported

clothes, their children went to private schools and some of them even had cars. Everybody in the village envied them and talked about how lucky these people were to have gone to the Gulf. The Gulf became the dreamland for those who did not have the same good fortune. My family wanted to send me to the Gulf. If our neighbours could do it we also could do it. Coming to Abu Dhabi cost my family about twenty thousand Rupees.

It seems, then, that the experience of many successful migrants played an important role in motivating the people of Kerala to seek employment in the Gulf countries. Surprisingly quick improvements in the living conditions of those who did go to the Gulf, not only amplified the relative deprivation of those who had not migrated but also portrayed the Gulf countries as a dreamland or treasure island. Going to the Gulf was depicted as the magic wand that would change the fate of those who succeeded in reaching these countries. It was not so much the actual conditions in the would-be host country, that triggered many migrants to try their fortune abroad, as the real and imagined accomplishments of those who went to these societies. These accomplishments played two different roles at the same time, so to speak; they magnified the push factors on the one hand and the pull factors on the other.

In summary, while the relative poverty and lack of employment opportunities in Kerala seem to be overridingly important in stimulating people to migrate and seek employment in the Gulf countries, these factors seem to affect various groups in different ways according to religious affiliation, educational attainment and level of income. Thus, as discussed above, reasons for migration as

perceived by the migrants themselves varied according to religion, level of education and monthly earnings of the migrants. Detailed information from the in depth case studies suggested that migration decisions are usually a complex matter and involve many factors. Having in mind that the 'real' reason or reasons for leaving one's own place of origin and migrate to some other place is very difficult to ascertain for various reasons, not the least of which are the tendency of the people to reconstruct their motivations after they have already migrated, and that people's goals and aspirations often change over time, nonetheless, the data obtained from the large scale survey and that from the in depth case studies demonstrate that poverty is a relative condition and means different things to different people and that economic reasons are often expressed in terms of contributing to the economic situation of the family, marrying daughters and/or sisters, providing better education for children or brothers, building extra room onto the parents' house and to acquire independence from the extended family by building a separate house.

3. The Process of Moving

In the previous section, we dealt with the reasons for migration as perceived by the migrants. An attempt was made to establish whether there were any differences between the different religious, educational and economic groups. In this section we turn to the process of moving, securing

entrance to the U.A.E., the costs of migration and financing the initial costs of migration.

It seemed that the process of moving was influenced to a great extent by the presence of relatives and friends in the host country. The effective and practical role played by relatives and friends, both in the sending and the receiving communities, is well documented in the literature of migration⁽³⁾. In the preceding pages we have noticed that some of the migrants were able to make it to the U.A.E. through the help of relatives or friends. In the following pages an attempt will be made, further to investigate the role of the kinship and friends in the process of moving to the host country.

3.1. Household Members in the U.A.E.

The data in Table 4.2 show that about 68 per cent of the migrants had one member or more of their households working in the U.A.E. on the eve of migration, compared to 32 per cent only who had no members of their households in the host country. The data also show that about 37 per cent of the migrants had more than one member in the U.A.E. and about 17 per cent had more than two members working in the host country. Looking at each religious group, one finds that the Muslim group has the lion's share. The proportion of Muslim migrants who had one member or more of their households working in the U.A.E. on the eve of migration was 75.2 per cent. The corresponding percentages for the Hindus and Christians were 25.6 and 8.3 per cent.

TABLE 4.2

HOUSEHOLDS BY NUMBER OF MEMBERS WORKING IN THE U.A.E.
ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION BY RELIGIOUS GROUP (%)

HOUSEHOLDS MEMBERS WORKING IN THE U.A.E.	RELIGIOUS GROUPS			TOTAL
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	
No one	24.8	74.4	91.7	32.0
1 member	32.9	20.3	8.3	31.0
2 members	23.4	3.8	—	20.5
3 members	18.9	1.5	—	16.5
TOTAL %	100	100	100	100
n,	822	133	12	1027

TABLE 4.3

MIGRANTS BY NUMBERS OF RELATIVES WORKING IN THE U.A.E.
ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION BY RELIGIOUS GROUP (%)

NUMBER OF RELATIVES WORKING IN THE U.A.E.	RELIGIOUS GROUPS			TOTAL
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	
No one	9.6	47.4	66.7	15.2
1 relative	41.7	29.3	25.0	40.0
2 relatives	34.8	13.5	8.3	31.7
3 relatives	9.5	9.8	—	9.4
4 relatives	3.3	—	—	2.8
5 relatives	1.0	—	—	0.9
TOTAL* %	100	100	100	100
n.	882	133	12	1027

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

3.2. Relatives in the U.A.E.

If, however, one considers the presence of relatives in the U.A.E., rather than household members, one finds that as many as slightly less than 85 per cent of the migrants had relatives working in various cities of the U.A.E. on the eve

of migration. As Table 4.3 shows, almost as many as 45 per cent of the migrants had two or more relatives in the host country and about 13 per cent had three relatives or more. Here again, the proportion of Muslim migrants who had relatives in the U.A.E. was the highest; slightly over 80 per cent.

TABLE 4.4

**MIGRANTS BY NUMBERS OF FRIENDS WORKING IN THE U.A.E.
ON THE EVE OF MIGRATION BY RELIGIOUS GROUP (%)**

NUMBER OF FRIENDS WORKING IN THE U.A.E.		RELIGIOUS GROUPS			TOTAL
		MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	
No one		8.2	15.8	16.7	9.4
1 friend		17.3	28.6	33.3	22.0
2 friends		27.4	21.8	25.0	32.2
3 friends		21.4	17.3	25.0	15.9
4 friends		12.2	10.5	—	9.3
5 friends		6.6	6.0	—	5.5
6 friends		4.2	—	—	3.6
7 friends		2.6	—	—	2.2
TOTAL		%	100	100	100
		n.	882	133	1027

3.3. Friends in the U.A.E.

The data in Table 4.4 indicate that as many as slightly less than 91 per cent of the migrants had one friend or more working in the U.A.E. on the eve of migration. More than 68 per cent had two friends or more, about one third had three friends or more and slightly more than one tenth had at least five friends. Although the proportion of the Muslim migrants who had friends in the U.A.E. at the time of

migration was larger than that of the Hindus and Christians, the differences between the three religious groups were not as marked as those observed in terms of household members and relatives.

3.4. Source of Information About the U.A.E.

The decision to migrate is probably affected by the way the potential migrant receives information on employment opportunities in the host country. Various services are performed within the kinship network in the context of migration⁽⁴⁾. One important function of the kinship group is the highly effective communication network. Describing the advantages which the extended family has over the nuclear one, Litwak states: "Because of its close ties and size, the extended family had superior lines of communication." (Litwak, 1960:386).

Table 4.5

MIGRANTS BY SOURCE OF INFORMATION OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY IN THE U.A.E. BY RELIGIOUS GROUP (%)

SOURCE OF INFORMATION	RELIGIOUS GROUPS			TOTAL
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	
Relatives	66.9	17.3	33.3	60.1
Friends	21.1	59.4	41.7	26.3
Recruiting agents	3.3	13.5	8.3	4.7
Newspapers	8.7	9.8	16.7	8.9
TOTAL %	100	100	100	100
TOTAL n.	882	133	12	1027

This point of view is partly supported by the information obtained in this study. Although vague information about the Gulf countries is spread among the Keralites in general, more detailed information is available to some segments of the population through their relatives and friends who are working in the Gulf countries, especially through those who are on home leave. Others, however, get their information through advertisements in the local newspapers and recruiting agencies. Thus, as Table 4.5 shows, when the migrants were asked about how they came to know about the U.A.E., slightly more than three fifths of them reported that it was through relatives working in the U.A.E., and a little more than one quarter said it was by way of friends. Those who reported that they knew about the U.A.E. through sources other than relatives or friends constituted 13.5 per cent only, 4.7 per cent claiming that their source of information was recruiting agencies and about 9 per cent saying it was through local newspapers.

The data in Table 4.5 also show some differences between the three religious groups. It seems that Muslim migrants were more likely to receive information about the host country and employment opportunities from their relatives, while Hindus depended more upon their friends and recruiting agents. Depending on newspapers as source of information was higher among Christians than among Muslims and Hindus.

3.5. Securing Entrance to the U.A.E.

The data collected by the large survey, as well as those obtained from the in-depth investigation, reveal, as will be discussed in the following pages, that in the community under study the typical form of migration from Kerala to the U.A.E. is that of "chain migration"⁽⁵⁾ in which a migrant, once in the host country, helps another member of his household, a relative or a friend in the sending community to join him. Household members or relatives in the sending community cooperate together in contributing enough cash to finance the initial cost of the migration of one person who, after establishing himself in the host country passes information about the receiving community and employment opportunities back to those left behind and helps from his savings to pay off whatever debt may have been incurred to finance his migration and to finance the migration of another member of the household or relative who decides to join him. After the second member has settled down, the two of them help a third and a fourth person to make their way to the host country. In this way the chain of migration develops. Chain migration seems to be the characteristic of migration from the Indian subcontinent(Dahya, 1974:30-33 and Jeffery, p. 1976:48).

It was observed above, however, that there were quite a few migrants who had no relatives in the host country before them; these formed about one tenth only of the Muslim migrants, but slightly over 47 per cent of the Hindus and

about 67 per cent of the Christian migrants. The great majority of these migrants depended on themselves and on their relatives in the sending communities to finance the initial cost of their migration while depending on their friends working in the host country to facilitate their entrance to the receiving country.

TABLE 4.6

MIGRANTS BY MEANS OF SECURING NOC OR VISA
TO ENTER THE U.A.E. BY RELIGIOUS GROUP (%)

MEANS OF SECURING NOC OR VISA	RELIGIOUS GROUPS			TOTAL
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	
Relatives	45.5	33.8	25.0	43.7
Friends	31.2	38.3	50.0	32.3
Recruiting agents	13.1	21.1	8.3	14.1
Direct application to employer in the U.A.E.	3.5	6.8	16.7	4.1
Others	6.7	—	—	5.7
TOTAL %	100	100	100	100*
n.	882	133	12	1027

*Total does not add to 100 because of rounding.

Table 4.6 confirms that the great majority of the migrants depended on relatives and friends working in the U.A.E. as their means of securing visas to enter the U.A.E.. These accounted for about 76 per cent, 43.7 per cent receiving their visas by the help of relatives and 32.3 depending on friends in the U.A.E.. Those who used recruiting agencies as their means of obtaining visas formed little more than 14 per cent only, whereas those who secured visas through direct application to an employer in the

U.A.E. formed about 4 per cent. A small number of the migrants, forming slightly less than 6 per cent, found their way to the U.A.E. by ways other than those mentioned above. These were entirely Muslims who entered the U.A.E. by illegal means; most of them came before 1975 and some of them even before 1970 by way of Arab and Indian merchants' dhows and launches (see cost of migration below).

The data in Table 4.6 also show that Muslim migrants were more likely to depend on relatives in the host country to secure visas and were less likely to rely on direct application to employers, whereas Hindu and Christian migrants were more likely to depend on friends working in the U.A.E. to provide them with visas. Hindus seemed to be less likely to rely on direct applications to employers and Christians were found to be less likely to depend on recruiting agencies.

3.6. Costs Incurred by Migration

Migration from Kerala to the U.A.E. seems to be a relatively expensive process. Migrants had to spend money on various items such as passports, medical check ups, immigration clearance, visas and transportation. While several of these items were not expensive and cost the same for all of the migrants, the visas and transportation were often very expensive and varied from one migrant to another, depending on the means of transportation, the means by which the visa was obtained and the year of migration. The migrants were asked about the total amount they had spent to

finance the initial costs of migration and whether they regarded it as very expensive, expensive, reasonable or inexpensive.

TABLE 4.7(a)
MIGRANTS BY COST INCURRED FOR MIGRATION
TO THE U.A.E BY RELIGIOUS GROUP (%)

COSTS INCURRED (IN RUPEES)	RELIGIOUS ROUPS			TOTAL
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	
Less than 1,000	2.3	—	—	1.9
1,000 To 5,000	6.5	0.8	—	5.6
5,100 To 10,000	10.1	21.8	8.3	11.6
10,100 To 15,000	46.6	35.3	58.3	45.3
15,100 To 20,000	23.7	23.3	25.0	23.7
20,100 To 25,000	6.2	10.5	8.3	6.8
25,100 To 30,000	3.5	8.3	—	4.1
Over 30,000	1.1	—	—	1.0
TOTAL* %	100	100	100	100
n.	882	133	12	1027

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

The great majority of the migrants (about 69 per cent) spent between 10,100 and 20,000 Rupees. For slightly more than 17 per cent of them, the cost incurred was between 1,000 to 10,000 Rupees. Migration was quite costly for almost 12 per cent of the migrants, as they paid a large sum of money; 20,100 Rupees or more . Those who paid as little as less than 1,000 Rupees and those who spent more than 30,000 Rupees formed very small proportions, slightly under two and one per cent respectively. Interestingly, all of these happened to be Muslims. Leaving aside these 'extreme' cases, the data in Table 4.7(a) suggests that emigration

from Kerala to the U.A.E. is a costly process as most of the migrants (about 81 per cent) paid more than 10,000 Rupees before they were able to reach the U.A.E..

Nonetheless, when the migrants were asked about their opinion regarding the costs of migration, the great majority of them (61 per cent) reported that immigration was expensive for them and almost 12 per cent considered it very expensive. Slightly more than 15 per cent felt that the amount of money they had spent was reasonable and 11.5 per cent regarded the costs of immigration as inexpensive (see Table 4.7(b)).

TABLE 4.7(b)

MIGRANTS BY THEIR PERCEPTION OF MIGRATION
COSTS BY RELIGIOUS GROUP (%)

COSTS OF MIGRATION	RELIGIOUS GROUPS			TOTAL
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	
INEXPENSIVE	12.9	3.0	—	11.5
REASONABLE	14.3	21.8	25.0	15.4
EXPENSIVE	62.0	57.9	66.7	61.5
VERY EXPENSIVE	10.8	17.3	8.3	11.6
TOTAL %	100	100	100	100
TOTAL n.	882	133	12	1027

Some variation in the costs incurred was also observed as far as the year of migration was concerned. On the one hand, all of the migrants who came to the U.A.E. before 1973 had spent 5,000 Rupees or less. These formed 5.6 percent

only of the migrants in the community under study. The rest of the migrants (94.4 per cent) on the other hand, had spent more than 5,000 Rupees. These migrants, however, came after 1972 (see Appendix 7). This observation suggests that the costs of migration increased at the same time as the demand for foreign labour accelerated as a result of the various modernization and development projects which were started immediately after the sharp increases in oil prices.

TABLE 4.7(c)

MIGRANTS BY COSTS INCURRED FOR MIGRATION ACCORDING TO THE MEANS BY WHICH ENTRANCE TO THE U.A.E WAS SECURED (%)

COSTS INCURRED IN Rs. 1,000	MEANS BY WHICH ENTRANCE WAS MADE					TOTAL
	RELA- TIVES	FRIEND	RECRUIT- ING AGENCIES	DIRECT APLICA- TION TO EMPLOYER	OTHER MEANS	
less than 1	1.6	—	—	—	22.0	1.9
1,000 - 5	2.4	0.3	—	—	78.0	5.6
5,100 - 10	17.1	7.8	4.8	21.4	—	11.6
10,100 - 15	50.3	48.2	31.7	78.6	—	45.3
15,100 - 20	23.8	28.3	29.0	—	—	23.7
20,100 - 25	2.9	9.9	16.6	—	—	6.8
25,100 - 30	1.8	5.4	11.0	—	—	4.1
Over 30	—	—	6.9	—	—	1.0
TOTAL* %	100	100	100	100	100	100
n.	449	332	145	42	59	1027

* Total may not add to 100 because of rounding.

As the data in Table 4.7(c) illustrate, all of the migrants who illegally entered the U.A.E. spent a relatively small amount of money; not more than 5,000 Rupees, and 22 per cent of them spent even less than one thousand Rupees,

whereas all of the migrants who secured their visas through direct application to employer or through recruiting agencies, almost all of those recruited through friends working in the U.A.E. and nearly 96 per cent of those recruited through relatives in the host country, spent more than 5,000 Rupees. Moreover, while the proportion of the migrants for whom the costs of migration amounted to more than 15,000 Rupees was only 28.5 per cent of those recruited through relatives, it reached about 44 per cent of those recruited through friends and about 61 per cent of the agencies' recruited migrants. It seems, therefore, that the agencies' recruited migrants were more likely to spend more than those recruited through other means. It was only among the agencies' recruited migrants that the costs incurred for migration reached a high amount of more than 30,000 Rupees.

The differences in the amount of money paid by the migrants as a result of different means of securing entrance to the U.A.E. are further highlighted by the following detailed accounts reported by migrants from the in-depth case studies. The first account was made by Hajji, a 47 year old Muslim who came to the U.A.E. in 1968. He commented on how he made it to the U.A.E. as follows:

I did not pay too much money, maybe five or six hundred Rupees. I don't remember exactly but I am sure it was less than a thousand. I was 29 years old when I first came to this country. I did not have a passport; at that time one needed to go to Bombay or Madras to get a passport.... You know, some of my friends went to Bahrain, Oman and other places with no passports ... they went by launch ... they paid a few hundred Rupees

to the owner of the launch. I heard about Dubai from an old neighbour and from my friend Jamal. ... decided to go to Dubai and try my luck. Jamal also wanted to go to Dubai but he wanted some friend to go with him. Thus, when I told him that I was ready to go with him he was very happy. After a few days Jamal came to me and told me to get ready and have the money ready with me. ... a few days later we were in the launch on our way to Dubai....

Stories similar to that of Hajji were often reported by the migrants who had come to the country before 1970. They had come by dhows and launches that crossed the Arabian sea carrying goods between India and the Gulf countries and had entered these countries without any legal documents. These, however, formed a small proportion even of the Muslim migrants (27 persons or about 3 per cent). Another group of migrants had come to the country during the British occupation of the Emirates. These usually came to the U.A.E. with the visiting visas obtainable from the British Embassy in India. Migrants who had come to the country in this way formed another small proportion of the Muslim group (less than two per cent). These too, spent a small amount of money and also came by launches or ships.

Another interesting story was told by Abdull, who came to Abu Dhabi in 1971 through the help of his father-in-law:

My father-in-law came to this country in 1967. After two years he managed to establish himself here through trade in partnership with a local man. He wrote to me once asking me to join him in Abu Dhabi... and since a working visa was very hard to get he sent me a visiting permission approved by the British Political Agency in Abu Dhabi. When I received it, I took it to the British Embassy in Bombay where they, according to the letter, issued me a visiting visa for one month on 27 May 1971. A few days later I reached

Abu Dhabi by launch. Since I came I worked in many jobs, but thanks to my father-in-law's partner I got a job in the Ministry of Education as caretaker in September 1974 and I have been working in the Ministry since then. As far as I can remember coming to Abu Dhabi did not cost me more than the visa charges and the launch tolls; all in all I paid about 500 Rupees.

A clarification worth making here is that there were at least two ways to enter the Trucial States before the withdrawal of the British from the region. The first was the illegal entry which was relatively easy and at the same time not so expensive. This illegal entry took place either by crossing the border from Oman to the northern states or by sea in one of the Arab or Indian merchants' dhows or launches. The almost non-existence of real and effective supervision on the border and ports encouraged many people to enter the Trucial States, not only those from Kerala and India in general but also from other countries like Iran and Pakistan as well. The second way was to get somebody in the Trucial States as a sponsor, under which condition the British Authority would always issue a visa to enter one of the Trucial States. This type of entry, although legal, was not too costly.

During the British occupation of the region, all of the seven emirates which formed the Trucial States were wide open for the Indians who were financially able and willing to establish any business as long as they paid whatever taxes there were. The rulers of these states adopted a "laissez faire, laissez passer" policy which encouraged such commercial and trading activities, as the taxes levied on

the merchants and traders, and the duties charged on importing and re-exporting activities, formed one of their main sources of income. This encouraging environment on the one hand and the reluctance of the local people to engage in commercial activities on the other, not only motivated wealthy businessmen from Kerala and India in general and from other countries like Iran and Pakistan to venture in these states, but also inspired ambitious migrants to turn, in course of time, into small businessmen and petty traders.

Migrants from Kerala, known as Malabarries, succeeded in such activities, establishing small scale businesses especially in restaurants and coffee shops, selling sweets, pastries and other food items imported from India. In time these Keralite businessmen, petty traders and small shop owners became employers of their relatives and friends from Kerala. Later, when the need for foreign labour intensified, they combined with local partners to make fortunes by trading in visas, which was probably as rewarding as any other business. Once a person was in the Trucial States he could stay as long as he was not caught entering the country illegally or as long as he was in business and could renew his stay visa.

After the independence of the Trucial States and just before the oil boom migration to these states, now known as U.A.E., entry was still not costly. Illegal migration continued, but legal entry to the country was still not so difficult if one had a connection; a relative or friend in

the U.A.E.. Although at this time a local sponsor was needed if one was to enter the country, with a few hundred Derhams one could buy a visa for his relative or friend through a local person. As was indicated earlier, it was observed that all of the migrants who came before 1973 reportedly spent not more than 5,000 Rupees for both visa and transportation (see Appendix 7).

It was in 1975, when demand for labour increased sharply as the process of development and modernization accelerated, that migration from Kerala and other parts in India as well as from other countries became very expensive, particularly for those who came as unskilled or even semi-skilled labourers. The great demand for labour in the oil rich states, coupled with the large supply in countries such as India, Pakistan and other Asian countries resulted in the commercialization of migration. Manpower import and export became an easy and profitable business in both exporting and importing countries. Recruiting agencies, licensed and unlicensed, entered this business finding it easy to operate, involving little investment and risk but at the same time richly rewarding. For instance, in Bombay alone there were not less than 450 license agents (The Times of India, February 9, 1989:26).

Migrants from Kerala as well as those from other parts of India who had no relatives or friends in the U.A.E. depended on these recruiting agencies to secure visas and employment in the U.A.E.. As was observed earlier (Table

4.6) 14.1 per cent of the migrants under study secured their visas and 'promised' employment through recruiting agents. Emigration rules in India allowed recruiting agents to collect a service charge of 1,000 Rupees for each candidate, the limit being raised to 2,000 Rupees after 1985 and recently to 3,000 Rupees (The Times of India, February 9, 1989:27). However, the migrants interviewed reported having paid the recruiting agencies large amounts of money ranging from 10,000 to 30,000 Rupees depending on the type of recruiting agency (licensed or unlicensed), type of job applied for and the waiting period from application time to migration. Some of these migrants paid more money than others because they had contacted illegal recruiting persons.

In other words, because of the great competition caused by the large supply of those wanting to migrate and the urgent desire of those migrants to go to these 'dream lands' the recruiting agencies seized their opportunity and charged more than was allowed by the law. Policing of recruiting processes and its agents was not an easy task in a situation such as that prevalent in India:

... out of 450 recruiting agents in Bombay ... 30 licences have been suspended for violative activities, but most of these agents have quickly managed to re-enter business by acquiring fresh licence under a different name even though the rules specify that a suspended licensee cannot be issued with another licence for two years (The Times of India, February 9, 1989:26).

It seems that the problem of overcharging of would-be migrants by recruiting agents was not limited to India only but occurred all over south and south east Asia (Ali, et. al., 1981:12-13; Stahl, 1984:16 and Smart, et. al., 1986:105). Despite the enforcement of strict recruiting regulations, the urgent desire to reach the Gulf countries and the competition among huge numbers of prospective migrants will always provide the opportunity for recruiters to take advantage of this competitive atmosphere to exploit these people (Arnold and Shah, 1989:12-13).

Many U.A.E. locals have also benefited from the great demand for labour. It is required by law that every imported worker needs to have a local Kafeel or sponsor in order to enter and work in the U.A.E.. The institution of the kafeel, coupled with the increasing demand for labour and the almost unlimited supply in sending countries such as India, created a new phenomenon that can be described as a trade in human beings. Many U.A.E. locals imported as many workers as they could handle. By travelling to a sending country, a kafeel could recruit the desired number of workers of various skills and then send them to the U.A.E. where they would be distributed among various enterprises as employees of his. Alternatively, a kafeel could just import the workers and then "retail" them to other employers for a percentage of their wages, or charge them a fixed amount at the time of visa renewal. The kafeel usually kept the passports and all other documents of the workers with him, thus not only

extracting a substantial profit from them but also controlling them completely⁽⁶⁾.

Another method by which a kafeel might operate was to provide a visa for a potential worker for a few thousands Derhams; usually 3000 to 5000 Derhams. When the worker reached the U.A.E. he would be on his own until he found a job. If he succeeded, then he could transfer his sponsorship to his employer, providing that the first kafeel had no objections. Usually the first kafeel gave his sponsored worker a release after charging him another couple of thousand Derhams. The great majority of the migrants (about 75 per cent) in the community under study came to the U.A.E. in this way. A relative or friend of a potential migrant contacted a local kafeel (usually through some Keralites who knew the kafeel and operated as middlemen) to buy a visa. Visas obtained this way usually cost between 3,000 to 5,000 Derhams or about 15,000 to 25,000 Indian Rupees.

Interestingly enough, even local women were dragged into this easy but richly rewarding business, thanks to some Keralite opportunists who because of the ignorance and greed of some local men and women and the need of their fellow Keralites made a good fortune. Nooruldeen, a 34 year old Keralite from Malapuram, came to Abu Dhabi in 1976 by visa bought by his brother Ezuldeen who explained how he got it in these words:

... discussed the matter with my friends who are living with me in the same room. One of my friends suggested that I had to talk to Hassan.

"Hassan has his connections" said my friend, "and if you really want to bring your brother you must see this man". The next day my friend and I went to see this Hassan. He is a Keralite from Trivandrum, in his early forties, who established himself in Abu Dhabi as a fruit and vegetable trader. He asked 5,000 Derhams for the visa. My friend explained to him that I am a very poor person, and that I have been in Abu Dhabi for only one year now, and that he will be doing me and my family a great favour. Finally, he agreed to take 3500 Derhams and said, " My partner will not agree to make your brother's visa with this amount but I will do my best to convince her that you are my relative, and -listen to me carefully- don't tell anybody that I charged you this amount only; please don't ruin my business." In the afternoon of the same day we went to see Hassan to give him a photocopy of my brother's passport, six photographs and of course the 3500 Derhams. He told us that there might be some delay as his partner, Asha, had gone to see her relatives in Al-Ain and that she would be back in two or three weeks. After two months my brother's visa was ready.

In short, the cost of migration varied according to whether or not a potential migrant had a relative or friend in the host country, and to the way in which he was recruited, the means of transportation, and the way the visa was obtained. Nevertheless, for the great majority of the migrants the process of moving to the U.A.E. seemed to be relatively expensive.

3.7. Financing Initial Costs of Migration

Mobilization of funds to finance the initial cost of migration is probably another difficult task faced by the migrants. As the data in Table 4.8 indicate, only 54 persons, or about 5.3 per cent of the migrants interviewed, depended on their own savings to finance the cost of migration. These were mainly those whose migration was

relatively not costly, who came by dhows or launches, and who entered the country illegally or during the British occupation of the states. The rest of the migrants had to depend on other members of their households, relatives, friends, money lenders and other ways such as the selling of some of the household's assets such as land or jewellery. Some of the migrants drew upon more than one source.

Khoya, for example needed 20,000 Rupees to finance his migration. He had to draw upon his parents' savings for about 50 per cent of the total cost. The other 50 per cent was gathered from various sources. Thirty per cent of the cost was obtained by selling a gold chain belonging to his older sister after promising that he would buy her an even better one when he went to the Gulf, and the rest of the money was borrowed from a money-lender in the village, at an interest rate of 15 per cent.

As Table 4.8 shows, the majority (about 59 per cent) of the migrants, however, depended on members of their households and other relatives for loans. Such loans were interest free or at worst at very low interest rates, usually paid in the form of presents that migrants took with them when they went home on leave or in the form of helping a relative to migrate. Here again, one finds that the role of kinship and friends is rooted in the process of migration. Litwak, explained that the extended families as a group were far more able to finance the migration of one or more of their members than the nuclear family or the

individual member. The members of an extended family may pool their resources to finance the migration of one member who, after he has migrated, would send home part of his earnings which would be used to enable other member to join him (Litwak, 1960:385-7).

TABLE 4.8
MIGRANTS BY SOURCE OF FINANCE
BY RELIGIOUS GROUP (%)

SOURCE OF FINANCE	RELIGIOUS GROUPS			TOTAL
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	
Personal savings	4.4	8.3	33.3	5.3
Parents and other household's members	42.9	28.6	41.7	41.0
Borrowing from relatives	17.2	21.0	8.3	17.6
Borrowing from friends	6.9	3.8	8.3	6.5
Borrowing from banks and money lenders	7.3	4.5	—	6.8
Sales of household assets	21.3	33.8	8.3	22.8
TOTAL*	%	100	100	100
	n.	882	133	1027

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

Sales of assets such as land or household jewellery were reported to be the only way of financing the cost of migration for almost 23 per cent of the migrants under study (see Table 4.8). Of those, about 93.6 percent (219 persons) preferred to sell some of the household's jewellery as it was easier to redeem, whereas only 6.4 per cent (15 persons) reported that they had no choice but to sell a small part of their household's land to get the money needed for the cost

of migration. The rest of the migrants (about 13.3 per cent) depended on borrowing from friends (6.5 per cent) or from banks and money lenders (6.8 per cent).

3.8. Waiting Period Between Recruitment and Migration

Not only were the migrants interviewed heavily exploited by the "visa traders" in the host society and the recruiting agencies in both sending and receiving communities, but they also had to cope with various problems and difficulties before as well as after migration. Reliance on relatives and friends for securing entrance to and employment in the host country resulted in a relatively long waiting period between recruitment and migration as well as between migration and employment. In this part, the discussion will be limited to the earlier waiting period as it pertains to the pre-migration phase, leaving the later waiting period to be discussed in the next chapter.

As the data in Table 4.9(a) show, more than 52 per cent of the migrants interviewed had to wait for over a year before they reached the U.A.E., almost 23 per cent waited for more than one and a half years and about one tenth of them waited for more than two years. Some variation in the waiting period was observed between migrants according to the means by which entry to the U.A.E. had been secured. From the data in Table 4.9(a) it seems that the waiting period was more likely to be longer for migrants who relied on their friends for their visas and shorter for those who

entered the country illegally . Thus, while only 5.1 per cent of the illegal migrants waited for more than one and a half year before they made it to the U.A.E., the corresponding proportion of those recruited through friends working in the host country reached almost 35 per cent.

TABLE 4.9(a)

MIGRANTS BY WAITING PERIOD BETWEEN RECRUITMENT AND MIGRATION ACCORDING TO THE MEANS BY WHICH ENTRANCE TO THE U.A.E WAS SECURED (%)^{*}

WAITING PERIOD (IN MONTHS)	MEANS BY WHICH ENTRANCE WAS MADE					TOTAL
	RELA- TIVES	FRIEND	RECRUIT- ING AGENCIES	DIRECT APLICA- TION TO EMPLOYER	OTHER MEANS	
Less than 6	18.0	12.7	23.4	16.7	35.6	19.1
6 to 12	29.6	22.3	35.2	35.7	37.3	28.5
12 to 18	33.4	30.4	20.7	38.0	22.0	29.6
19 to 24	12.0	18.4	11.0	4.8	5.1	13.0
25 to 30	5.8	12.6	6.9	4.8	—	7.7
Over 30	1.1	3.6	2.8	—	—	2.0
TOTAL %	100	100	100	100	100	100
TOTAL n.	449	332	145	42	59	1027

* Total may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Waiting period, however, seemed to vary significantly when the year of migration was taken into consideration. As Table 4.9(b) indicates, the waiting period between recruitment and migration for the great majority (almost 92 per cent) of the migrants who had come to the U.A.E. between 1966 and 1970 was less than six months only, it was between six and twelve months for 5.5 per cent of them and it was more than a year for nearly 3 per cent. This pattern started

to alter after 1970 and the proportion of migrants who waited for less than six months continued to decrease from 91.6 for the period between 1966 and 1970 to merely 7.6 per cent for the period between 1980 and 1985 and declined even more after 1985, to only 4.7 per cent. The proportion of the migrants who waited for more than a year increased from nearly 3 per cent in the 1966-1970 period to more than 36 per cent in 1980-1985 period. The waiting period for each year from 1966 to 1988 is shown in Appendix 8.

TABLE 4.9(b)

MIGRANTS BY WAITING PERIOD BETWEEN RECRUITMENT AND MIGRATION
ACCORDING TO THE YEAR OF MIGRATION (%)*

WAITING PERIOD (IN MONTHS)	YEAR OF MIGRATION					TOTAL
	1966 TO 1970	1971 TO 1975	1976 TO 1980	1981 TO 1985	AFTER 1985	
Less than 6	91.7	56.4	27.8	7.6	4.7	19.1
6 to 12	5.5	21.8	38.0	29.7	25.8	28.5
13 to 18	2.8	15.4	28.2	36.9	30.7	29.6
19 to 24	—	6.4	5.6	14.3	20.5	13.0
25 to 30	—	—	0.4	9.9	13.7	7.7
Over 30	—	—	—	1.7	4.7	2.0
TOTAL* %	100	100	100	100	100	100
n.	36	110	216	343	322	1027

* Total may not add to 100 because of rounding.

This observation may be partly explained by the finding that most of the migrants in the community under study who came to the U.A.E. in this period entered the country

illegally and, therefore, did not have to wait for legal documents (visas or No Objection Certificates).

4. Summary

This chapter has presented and analysed the reasons given by the migrants themselves for their migration, and their circumstance immediately prior to the move. It is recognized that people may rationalize their actions after the event, and that goals may change over time, but we assume that the views expressed by migrants are nonetheless real and important.

The main reason for migration given by our respondents was lack of employment opportunities at home (cited by 61%). Family responsibilities, mostly the marriage of daughters or sisters, were cited by 17.8%. Very few respondents (5.5%) claimed to have migrated to amass capital for investment. Reasons for migration varied with religion, education and earnings. Economic motivation was cited more by Hindus and Christians, than by Muslims. Lack of employment opportunities was cited more by people lower down the educational scale, whereas aspirations to a better standard of living, or the desire for investment capital increased with education. Similarly, lack of employment opportunities became less important as earnings increased (being cited by 81.5% of those with no earnings, but only 11.4% of those earning 50 - 1000 rupees). However, the importance of this factor increased slightly in the top income bracket; the reason for this is unclear.

Family responsibilities as a motivation for migration appeared unrelated to education or earnings, while household's annual income showed no significant relationship with reasons for migration.

The reasons for migration given by respondents show that poverty is relative, that the decision to move is complex and multi-faceted, and that economic motivations are often expressed in terms of family contribution, not just personal aspirations.

Looking at the circumstances surrounding migration, we found that the majority (68%) of respondents already had one or more household members in the United Arab Emirates, and when we extended our enquiry to relatives beyond the immediate household, the proportion rose to 85%. Almost 91% had friends in the United Arab Emirates before their own move. Thus it is not surprising that the extended communication networks of family and friends were the main sources of information about the United Arab Emirates (60.1% and 26.3% for family and friends respectively). Muslims were more likely to depend on family, Hindus on friends or agents, and Christians on newspapers.

Some respondents (all Muslims) had entered the United Arab Emirates illegally, mostly before 1975. Legal entrants had been helped to migrate by family or friends who had already done so, and many of our respondents would

in turn help others from home to migrate. Thus, the predominant pattern was chain migration.

Migration involved considerable cost for the respondents: passports, visas, immigration clearance and transport all had to be paid for. Transport costs varied according to the type of transport, while the cost of visas varied according to source and date: those whose visas were arranged by recruiting agencies paid more, as did those who migrated after 1972, when increased oil revenues led to the commercialization of migration to serve the new development projects. The majority (69%) of respondents had paid 10,100 - 20,000 rupees and almost as many (61%) perceived migration as 'expensive'.

Only 5.3% of respondents had been able to meet these initial costs themselves. Most had received financial help from household members, relatives or friends, while some had sold assets or resorted to banks/money lenders. Some had used more than one source .

The waiting period between recruitment and migration varied from less than 6 months to 30 months or more. Those entering with the help of relatives or friends had to wait longer than those recruited by an employer or agency. Earlier migrants had less time to wait, possibly because more of these were illegal, or entered on the visitors' permits, which were easy to obtain during the British occupation of the Trucial states.

These, then, are the circumstances in which our migrants entered the U.A.E.. We shall now proceed to follow up their experiences once they entered the host country, beginning in Chapter 5 with an examination of the working conditions experienced by the migrants in the U.A.E.

NOTES

1. This approach has been adopted by some researchers. See for instance Engelbrektsson, 1978:18.
2. See also Ibrahim, 1982:69.
3. Some examples are: Choldin, 1973; Abu-Lughod, 1961; Melville, 1978; Stromberg, et al., 1974 and Tienda, 1980.
4. See for example Litwak, 1960.
5. MacDonald, J. S. and L. D. MacDonald, "Chain Migration, Ethnic Neighborhood Formation and Social Networks," Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly, 42 (1964), p. 82 defines "chain migration" as "that movement in which prospective migrants learn of opportunities, are provided with transportation, and have initial accommodation and employment arranged by means of primary social relationships with previous migrants." cited in Choldin, 1973:164-165.
6. The institution of Kafeel is not unique to the U.A.E.. It is practiced in virtually all of the Gulf States. See for example Ibrahim, 1982:12 and Al-Najar, 1983:415.

CHAPTER FIVE

WORKING CONDITIONS OF MIGRANTS IN THE HOST COUNTRY

1. Introduction

In this chapter an attempt will be made to argue that the legal and political restrictions imposed on the migrants, coupled with the ways through which they were recruited have had a negative effect on the migrants' working conditions, wages and salaries, and living conditions, including housing, medical care, etc.. In the following pages an attempt will be made to follow up these migrants from the day they entered the host country to the time of the study. As detailed a picture as possible will be given of the migrants' working conditions in the host country, the various problems faced by them and the various measures utilized by them to overcome these problems. Some emphasis will be placed on the role of relatives and friend in the host country. The problems pertaining to economic and living conditions will be examined in later chapters.

2. Initial Disappointment, Recruitment and Employment

As was observed in Chapter 4, the great majority (about 76 per cent) of the migrants in the community under study were recruited and their entrance to the U.A.E. was secured through "informal channels", i.e. through relatives and friends. This observation may explain the finding that more

than three fourths (76.9 per cent) of the migrants interviewed had come to the U.A.E. without securing employment whatsoever prior to migration, as Table 5.1 illustrates. Moreover, slightly more than eight per cent of the migrants claimed that they were only promised that they would get a job upon arrival in the U.A.E., but never entered into a formal contract before migration. The migrants who reported to have entered into a formal contract with their prospective employers prior to migration, either through recruiting agencies or by direct application to an employer in the host country, formed less than 15 per cent.

TABLE 5.1

**MIGRANTS BY TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENT
ACCORDING TO RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION (%)**

EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENT	RELIGIOUS GROUPS			TOTAL
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	
No employment secured	77.9	72.2	58.3	76.9
Employment secured through formal contract	15.3	10.5	25.0	14.8
Promised employment upon arrival but no contract has been made	6.8	17.3	16.7	8.3
TOTAL %	100	100	100	100
n.	882	133	12	1027

Some variations among the three religious groups were also found in Table 5.1. The proportion of the migrants who

did not secure any employment prior to migration seemed to be the largest (almost 78 per cent) among the Muslim group whereas those who did secure employment by entering into written contract seemed to be the largest among the Christian group. Moreover, the proportion of the migrants who were informally promised some employment upon arrival in the U.A.E. accounted for 17.3 and 16.7 per cent of the Hindu and Christian groups, proportions much larger than that found among the Muslim group.

This finding may suggest that Christian and to a lesser extent Hindu migrants in the community under investigation were more likely than Muslims to secure employment, at least through informal means, prior to migration. This is probably because, as indicated in Chapter 3, the Christian and the Hindu groups covered by this study were more educated than the Muslim group, the great majority of them were employed before coming to the U.A.E. and therefore had to be sure that they would get employment once they left their job in Kerala and last but not least, the great majority of the Christian and Hindu migrants in my sample were economically better off compared to the Muslim group, a condition which allowed them to pay the relatively greater amount of money demanded by the recruiting agencies for a guaranteed and well remunerated job.

Securing employment prior to migration also seemed to vary according to the means by which entrance to the host country was secured. As the data in Table 5.2 indicate,

slightly less than 92 per cent of the migrants whose entrance to the U.A.E. was secured through relatives working there did not secure employment prior to migration. The corresponding percentages for those who obtained visas through friends and those entered the country by other ways (mainly illegal) were 96.7 and 96.6 per cent respectively. A different picture was observed among the migrants who were recruited through direct application to employer or through recruiting agencies. Slightly more than 71 per cent of the former and about 84 per cent of the latter group secured employment by entering into formal contract with their prospective employers in the host country prior to migration.

TABLE 5.2

MIGRANTS BY TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENT
ACCORDING TO THE MEANS OF RECRUITMENT (%)

EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENT	MEANS BY WHICH RECRUITMENT WAS MADE				
	RELA- TIVES	FRIEND	RECRUIT- ING AGENCIES	DIRECT APLICA- TION TO EMPLOYER	OTHER MEANS
No employment secured	91.8	96.7	—	—	96.6
Employment secured through formal contract	—	—	84.1	71.4	—
Promised employ- ment upon arrival but no contract has been made	8.2	3.3	15.9	28.6	3.4
TOTAL	%	100	100	100	100
	n.	449	332	145	59

Surprisingly, large proportions (15.9 and 28.6 per cent) of the migrants who secured their entrance to the host country through recruiting agencies and those who obtained their visa by direct application to an employer did not enter into a formal contract (Table 5.2). They were merely informally promised a job upon arrival in the U.A.E..

TABLE 5.3
TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT RECEIVED ACCORDING
TO THE MEANS OF RECRUITMENT (%)

EMPLOYMENT RECEIVED	MEANS BY WHICH RECRUITMENT WAS MADE					TOTAL
	RELA- TIVES	FRIEND	RECRUIT- ING AGENCIES	DIRECT APLICA- TION TO EMPLOYER	OTHER MEANS	
Promised employment	35.1	36.4	42.1	50.0	100	42.6
Different employment	—	—	31.7	38.1	—	26.2
No employment received	64.9	63.6	26.2	11.9	—	31.2
TOTAL %	100	100	100	100	100	100
n.	37	11	145	42	2	237

Nonetheless, coming to the U.A.E. on the basis of a promise to get employment or even on the basis of a written formal contract prior to migration does not necessarily mean that a migrant will get the employment he was recruited for. As the information in Table 5.3 illustrates, as many as 26 per cent of the 237 migrants who entered into formal contract or informally were promised employment once they

were in the U.A.E. did not get the job they were promised or contracted for. Instead they were offered a different job, usually less well paid, given the same job but with less pay than specified in the contract signed in India or, alternatively, given a release to work somewhere else.

Detailed information from the in-depth case studies illustrates some of these practices. Ali, who came to the U.A.E. in 1978, was recruited with other Keralites to work as a labourer in a construction company. He described his experience as follows:

... when I and six other Keralites reached Dubai Airport an Arab man - I was told later that he was a Palestinian - was waiting for us at the airport. He drove us in a minibus right away to the construction site. We reached the site at about six o'clock in the evening. There, we were directed to a large caravan where we met five workers, two from Bangladesh and three from Kerala. They gave us a very warm welcome At seven o'clock in the morning of the next day the same Palestinian came to the site and took us to the hospital for a medical checkup. Then he took us to the company's main office in the city centre. Inside the office we were handed some papers to sign. We asked him about these papers which were written in Arabic. We were told that these were the contracts between the company and us. According to these contracts we were supposed to work from seven o'clock in the morning to five o'clock in the evening six days a week for a monthly salary of 500 Dirhams. We tried to explain to him that according to the contract we had already signed in India our salary would be 800 Dirhams but he started to shout at us "Forget about India " he said, "you are in the U.A.E. now" and called a person named Mustapha; a Muslim Keralite who was working as a supervisor in the company, to explain things to us. Mustapha explained in Malayalam that the contract we had signed in India was merely a formality needed to facilitate our migration and advised us to accept, if only temporarily, whatever the company had to offer and when the

project was finished we could either continue to work for the company or find a job somewhere else. He himself would help us get a release from the company free of charge. After all the trouble we had encountered in coming to this country we had no choice but to accept the company's offer and sign these contracts which meant not only that our pay was reduced by more than 37 per cent but also that our paid leave was altered from 30 days every year to 28 days every two years.

Situations such as the one mentioned in Ali's statement were not uncommon among the Keralite migrants. I was often told about similar situations as I sat talking with migrants or relatives or friends of migrants on one of those evenings when I was undertaking the field work in Abu Dhabi or in Kerala.

A large proportion (over 31 per cent) of the migrants did not receive any employment at all (Table 5.3), either because their relatives and friends recruited them on the basis of anticipated vacancies or because they were recruited by agencies for jobs in firms and companies that did not exist. The following statements made by two of the migrants in the in depth study clearly illustrate such a situation.

The first statement was made by Shan, a 39 year old Hindu who came to the U.A.E. in 1980 through a recruiting agency. A man came to his village claiming that he was an agent for a big recruiting agency in Bombay and that he was looking for young men willing to work in one of the Gulf States:

I was told ... that I was going to work as a mason in a big construction company in Abu Dhabi. I will never forget the name of that company 'The Modern Construction Company'. ... I was also told that someone from the company would pick me up at Abu Dhabi Airport. When I reached Abu Dhabi Airport, to my disappointment, nobody was waiting for me. I waited outside the airport for more than two hours, then I began to worry. I did not know where to go. Outside the Airport I saw three or four Keralites who were travelling with me. I walked towards them and started talking to one of them. His name was Ibraheem. He was waiting for a friend of his. I told Ibraheem about my problem. He suggested that I go with him when his friend came. Few minutes later Ibraheem's friend, Ommar, came and Ibraheem introduced me to him.

Ommar has been working in Abu Dhabi for the last five years. He found himself a job as a caretaker in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. He told me that in the morning when he went to work he would find out for me the address of the company. Ibraheem and I spent all the next morning in bed. When Ommar came at two o'clock in the afternoon he told us that the company for which I was recruited did not exist any more and probably some people were still using its name to recruit and import labourers from India and other countries. ... I then realized that I had lost all the money I had paid to the agent in Kerala. I thought we had better report this to the police, but Ommar laughed at me and said that going to the police would not help and probably the police would arrest me and keep me in jail until I found someone to sponsor me. Thus going to the police was out of the question. My problem had to be solved some other way....

The second statement was made by Mehfooz, a 34 year old, Muslim migrant who was recruited in 1977 to work as a carpenter in a furniture factory in Abu Dhabi:

I came to Abu Dhabi to work as a carpenter in an Italian Furniture Factory. The agency which recruited me took 13,000 Rupees. They told me that the job I was going to get in Abu Dhabi would be a well paying job; not less than 2,500 Rupees per month. After nine months of waiting the agency arranged for me all the

necessary papers and sent me to Abu Dhabi along with three other persons recruited for the same factory.

Fastening my seat belt in the airplane, I thought that all my dreams were about to become true. In the airplane I met Mr. Abu Baker, a Keralite from Cannanor District who was on his way back to Abu Dhabi after having spent one month's holiday in Kerala. He was sitting next to me. ... I told him about the job waiting for me in Abu Dhabi but he said that he had been living in Abu Dhabi since 1974 and had never heard about any Italian Furniture Factory or any other Italian factory in Abu Dhabi. He added that there was a furniture factory in Dubai but he did not think it was Italian.

When we reached Abu Dhabi Airport I saw two Keralites hand-cuffed and guarded by the police. I was told that their papers were forged. This made me worry. Mr. Abu Baker's remarks in the airplane and the sight of the two Keralites arrested by the police frightened me. My heart sank to my feet. It was not until I passed through the immigration check-point that I began to breath normally. Although my papers turned out to be in order, all of what I was told by the agency proved to be false. No one from the big Italian Factory came to collect us from the airport.

One of the three Keralites and I knew nobody in Abu Dhabi. It was almost one o'clock in the morning and we did not know where to go. Mr. Abu Baker suggested that we go to the Kerala Islamic Centre as it was Ramadhan month. He said that the centre would be open and that we would find many Keralites there praying and reading the Quran until dawn. We went to the centre where we discovered that we were not the only people to be recruited to work in firms that have never existed.

Incidents such as these point to the malpractices that were prevalent in Kerala of agents who recruit people for non-existent firms and the irresponsibility of employers in the host country who heartlessly exploited the migrants once they were in the host country. A Keralite who went through painful procedures to mobilize funds to finance the costs of

migration and waited for a long time before he could get to the host country, with all of his family depending on him, had no choice but to accept whatever job was available to him. Going back to Kerala without accomplishing anything was out of the question.

Legal action against the agents who deceived them was hardly ever taken by migrants. Not only was the agent usually in India, while the victimized migrant was in the U.A.E., but the legal procedures would take a long time and probably would cost the migrant a great deal of money. Similarly, action against employers in the U.A.E. who did not give the recruited Keralite the employment he was recruited for, or who altered the agreed payment, was very rarely resorted to. Of the 107 migrants who were recruited through direct application to an employer or through recruiting agencies and who encountered such problems, only 17 persons resorted to various methods available to them for amelioration of terms and conditions of their work. Nine of them appealed directly to their employers, six pleaded with the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi and two only reached the court. All of these attempts, however, turned out to be fruitless. Thus it was not surprising that the other migrants who faced similar problems did not bother to take any action and decided to accept what was offered to them or, in the case of those who did not get a job at all, to find employment somewhere else.

The reasons given for not raising any complaint were the fear of losing the job offered to them, fear of deportation and the common belief among the migrants that raising a complaint was of no use.

3. First Contact on Arrival

The presence of relatives, friends and even just people from the same sending community in the host country played an important role not only in securing entrance for their relatives and friends but also in providing various kinds of help and support for them after their arrival to the host country. The role of kin and friends has been repeatedly emphasized in the literature on internal migration⁽¹⁾. Upon arrival to the host community, migrants depend on their relatives, friends and even their fellow villagers to provide them with the basic and immediate needs of food, accommodation and even money (Browning and Feindt, 1971). Studies of international migration have also indicated the important role of kin and friends in the process of migration (Nair, 1986; Melville, 1978; French, 1986 and Engelbrektsson, 1978). Evidence from various studies suggests that when a migrant arrives in a host country for the first time, he is most likely to contact and stay with a relative or friend who provides him with lodging, information about the city and jobs, et cetera (Gholdin, 1973 and Nair, 1986).

The findings of this study tend to support the preceding discussion. As the data in Table 5.4 above

indicate, none of the migrants in the community under study reported to have made contact on arrival with the Indian Embassy or consulate in the U.A.E.. The proportion of migrants who made immediate contact with their employer or his representative was very small (less than 9 per cent) and they were entirely from the migrants who were recruited through agencies (about 42 per cent) or through direct application to employer (69 per cent). The great majority (about 89 per cent) made immediate contact with their relatives (52.6 per cent) or their friends (36.1 per cent). Another small proportion (2.5 per cent) reported to have made their first contact with individuals from their home State, usually friends or relatives of other migrants who came with them on the same flight

TABLE 5.4

**MIGRANTS BY FIRST CONTACT MADE ON ARRIVAL
IN THE U.A.E.AND MEANS OF RECRUITMENT (%)**

INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED	MEANS BY WHICH RECRUITMENT WAS MADE					TOTAL
	RELA- TIVES	FRIEND	RECRUIT- ING AGENCIES	DIRECT APLICA- TION TO EMPLOYER	OTHER MEANS	
Employer or his agent	—	—	42.1	69.0	—	8.8
Relatives	85.3	25.0	26.9	9.5	52.5	52.6
Friends	14.7	75.0	28.3	14.3	15.3	36.1
Others	—	—	2.7	7.1	32.2	2.5
TOTAL* %	100	100	100	100	100	100
n.	449	332	145	42	59	1027

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

What was unexpected, however, was that a large proportion even of the migrants who had been recruited by agencies or by direct application to employer did not make their first contact with their employer or his agent but with their friends, relatives or other individuals from Kerala. Some of these migrants managed through the help of relatives and friends to locate the companies and firms they were recruited for, but some others did not, simply because they were recruited for firms that did not exist. The cases of Shan and Mehfooz, mentioned earlier, are example of such incidents.

4. Getting a Job in U.A.E.

The great majority of the migrants in the community under investigation not only depended on their relatives and friends to secure entrance to the U.A.E. as indicted earlier, but also relied on them to provide for basic needs such as lodging, food and information about the new city and more importantly about employment in a society unknown to them.

As Tilly and Brown have pointed out, migrants are involved with relatives and friendship networks in all stages of the migration process, before the move, during migration and after arrival in the destination (1968:139:164). Reporting data which indicate the pervasiveness of kinship involvement in the migration of individuals into the city of Chicago, Choldin notes three kinds of help migrants receive from their relatives and

friends. The first is the "material help" such as providing the newcomers with accommodation, food, loans etc.. The second kind is what Choldin labels "intermediary help" such as helping the new arrivals to find a place to stay, finding a job etc.. The third kind is helping the new migrants to make new social connections; this includes activities which aid the new migrants to meet new friends and join in appropriate organizations (1973:167).

The findings in this study help to support the above description. As was noted earlier in Tables 5.1 and 5.3, the great majority (about 84 per cent or 864 persons) of the migrants in the community under study depended on their kin, friends and other individuals from Kerala to find jobs in the U.A.E.. Of these, 758 migrants were Muslims, 99 migrants were Hindus and seven were Christians.

The great majority (slightly more than 82 per cent or 711 persons) of these migrants managed through the help of their relatives and friends and other means to find employment after varying waiting periods (the waiting period between arrival to the host country and first employment is discussed in the next section). Slightly less than 18 per cent (153 persons) had not found employment, at least up to the time of this study. These, however, were among the migrants who came to the U.A.E. after 1985 (see Appendix 9). In this section an attempt will be made to shed some light on the process of finding employment after the arrival of the migrants in the host country and the

various means and ways which these migrants utilized to find employment.

As the data in Table 5.5 below show the great majority (87.9 per cent) of the migrants who did not have secure employment prior to migration but who managed to find a job after arriving in the host country, did so with the help of their relatives (50.7 per cent) or friends (37.2 per cent). Those who received help from sources other than relatives or friends formed slightly less than eleven per cent. Most of these received help from other Keralites whom they met for the first time in the U.A.E., but some were helped by other local residents. A very small percentage managed to find employment by direct approach to firms. These also made use of the information and knowledge of job opportunities provided by their friends.

TABLE 5.5

SOURCE OF HELP IN FINDING THE FIRST JOB IN THE
HOST COUNTRY ACCORDING TO RELIGION (%)

SOURCE OF HELP	RELIGIOUS GROUPS			TOTAL
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	
RELATIVES	51.7	43.4	42.8	50.7
FRIENDS	37.1	38.4	28.6	37.2
OTHERS	10.9	12.1	—	10.9
SELF EFFORTS	0.3	6.1	28.6	1.2
TOTAL %	100	100	100	100
n.	758	99	7	864

Looking at the different religious groups, one finds that although the great majority of the Hindu and Christian migrants found their first employment by the help of their relatives and friends, they showed a greater tendency to approach firms directly in their search for employment than the Muslim migrants.

The non-existence of any formal methods of obtaining employment, such as an employment exchange, left these migrants with no choice but to use informal channels. The process of finding jobs for the new arrivals, as well as for those who for one reason or another lose their jobs is rather a lengthy one and may involve more than one relative or friend. This is probably best demonstrated by the following comments from the in-depth case studies.

Ibraheem -whom we met earlier as Shan's first contact- came to Abu Dhabi in 1980. His visa was secured through his friend Ommar who had been working in Abu Dhabi since 1975. Ommar managed to find a caretaker's job for Ibraheem in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs where he was working. Ibraheem commented on how he found this job as follows:

When I reached Abu Dhabi my friend Ommar met me at the airport.... I have been staying with him ever since. There were nine of us in the same room. Ommar introduced me to his room mates. All of them came from the same Taluk of Chavakkad in Trichur District. Although I knew only Ommar all of them showed their willingness to help me finding a job. I thought I would find a job within few days but I was wrong.

In the evening of the next day Ommar introduced me to all of the people in the

house, all of whom were Keralites. He said I needed all the help I could get. There are six rooms in this house, as you know. He took me to each and every room. "Now everybody in the house knows that a job is needed for you," Ommar said. You know, we must help each other in this country, we all need each other if we are to survive; one might lose his job any time. Each of us keeps his eyes and ears open for any job opportunity in the places where he works.

I do not have any technical training and I was ready to do any job. I waited for almost three months before Ommar found a job for me. During this time I helped in cooking and cleaning our room. Ommar took me outside from time to time, showing me the city and the various Keralite voluntary associations. One night Ommar took me to visit one of his friends, Shahed, who had just returned from a holiday in Kerala. Shahed works with Ommar at the same Ministry as an office assistant in the office of Mr. X ⁽²⁾ taking messages and making and serving tea and coffee. Ommar asked him if he could help me to get a caretaker's or an office assistant's job in the ministry. Ommar told him that there was talk among the caretakers that the Ministry was going to employ a few caretakers and cleaners and if he could talk to Mr. X he would do us a great favour. Shahed was more than willing to help. He asked for my papers which we had made ready in advance. The papers constituted of a copy of my passport and a release from my "Kafeel".

A few days later Shahed told Ommar to take me to the ministry for an interview. It was not a real interview, they just wanted to see me in person. I started working as an office assistant in the personnel department.

All of the migrants who received help from their relatives and friends found jobs in more or less the way described in Ibraheem's statement, although the time taken between arrival and first employment varied considerably, as we shall see in the next section.

One of the migrants who received help in finding jobs from people other than relatives or friends was Mehfooz, who was recruited to work as a carpenter for a firm that never existed. Mehfooz did not have any relative or even a friend in Abu Dhabi when he first came. He entered the U.A.E. using a "No Objection Certificate" and he had to obtain a working visa if he wanted to stay legally in the country. However, since a working visa can be obtained only through a "Kafeel", Mehfooz needed a new Kafeel and hence a release from his old Kafeel; but since the old Kafeel - the firm for which Mehfooz was recruited - did not exist, there was no way that Mehfooz could obtain a working visa through formal procedures. He had to find some other way.

In the Kerala Islamic Centre Mehfooz met some Keralites from his own Taluk. They invited him to stay with one of them until his problem was solved. To correct his legal position through informal channels, Mehfooz needed 3,000 Dirhams. Slightly less than one third of the money was gathered from fifteen of the twenty-nine Keralites living in the house where he was hosted and the rest came from Mehfooz himself. He made this money by washing cars in the market place for nearly six months. Kamal, who invited Mehfooz to live with him, took the money and Mehfooz's passport to another Keralite who works in a video-hiring shop and after two months Mehfooz received his passport with a working visa and a release from a Kafeel that he had never seen⁽³⁾. Mehfooz explained how he got his first job as follows:

One day I was washing a car in the market place when a local man parked his Mercedes a few feet from me. I asked him if he would like his car washed. He said yes, in Arabic, but "you'd better wash it good if you want to be paid". He handed the keys over to me and asked me to lock the car when I finished and take the keys to him in his shop. He was so happy with my work that he asked me to wash his car every day. His name was Anwar.

In Anwar's shop I met Abdulsamad a Keralite working in the shop as salesman. Later I knew that he was not only a salesman but also a caretaker, a messenger and many more things; practically he was Anwar's right hand. One day after having washed Anwar's car I went to his shop to give him the keys. Abdulsamad was opening some large wooden containers outside the shop, so I went to talk to him and to give him a hand with the containers. We opened the containers and took the goods inside the shop and before I left I whispered to him that I am a carpenter and looking for a job and asked him if he could talk to Anwar to help me find a job somewhere. He said he could not talk to Anwar but he told me that Anwar's cousin, Azeez, owned a carpentry workshop in Musafah⁽⁴⁾. "Anwar is a very good man," he said, "you can talk to him yourself". I reluctantly approached Anwar's desk and told him that I was looking for a job. "He is a carpenter," Abdulsamad shouted from the far end of the shop. He told me to go to Musafah and talk to his cousin and tell him that Anwar sent me to him. I went with Kamal to see Azeez but I was told in the workshop that Azeez was out of the country and would be back in two months' time. I carried on washing cars in the market place. Anwar told me that he himself would speak to Azeez when he came back. By this time I had received my passport and the release from my unknown Kafeel.

In spite of the efforts made by Kamal, who by this time had become a very good friend of mine, I was still jobless. Two months later I reminded Anwar of his promise. He picked up the phone and rung his cousin in the workshop and when he finished he told me to go and see Azeez in his workshop first thing in the morning. The next day I went to Musafah to see Azeez. He offered me a job as a helper on a trial basis and if I showed him good work, he would see that I got promotion, and he did.

5. Waiting Period Between Migration and First Employment

Reliance on relatives and friends in finding employment after arrival in the host country, however, resulted in various sorts of inconvenience, not the least of which was the relatively long waiting period between arrival to the host country and engaging in remunerative employment.

As the data in Table 5.6(a) indicate, only about eleven per cent of the migrants managed to engage in some employment almost immediately (within less than one month) after arriving to the U.A.E., less than one tenth found their first job within one to three months and just over 26 per cent enrolled in some employment after a waiting period of four to six months. More than 38 per cent, however, had to wait for more than six months before they were able to get any job and as many as 4.7 per cent had to wait for more than twelve months. A relatively large proportion of almost 15 per cent reported that they had never been employed since they arrived to the country. These were mainly among the migrants who came to the country in 1986, 1987 and 1988 with the help of their relatives or friends.

The waiting period between arrival in the host country and first employment seemed to vary according to the means by which entrance to the host country were secured, as can be seen from Table 5.6(a). Almost 34 per cent of the agency-recruited migrants and as many as half of those who directly applied to an employer managed to get employment within less than one month after arrival to the host country. The

corresponding percentages for the migrants who secured their visas through relatives, friends and other means were 6.2, 4.2 and 3.4 per cent respectively. Similarly, the proportions of the migrants who waited for one to three months before they found a job were larger among migrants recruited by agencies or by direct application to employer than among those recruited by relatives, friends or other means. Generally speaking, migrants recruited by agencies or by direct application to employer were more likely to find jobs quickly than migrants recruited by relatives or friends.

TABLE 5.6(a)

WAITING PERIOD BETWEEN ARRIVAL IN THE U.A.E. AND
FIRST EMPLOYMENT BY MEANS OF RECRUITMENT (%)

WAITING PERIOD (IN MONTHS)	MEANS BY WHICH RECRUITMENT WAS MADE					TOTAL
	RELA- TIVES	FRIEND	RECRUIT- ING AGENCIES	DIRECT APLICA- TION TO EMPLOYER	OTHER MEANS	
LESS THAN 1	6.2	4.2	33.8	50.0	3.4	11.1
1 TO 3	6.0	4.5	29.0	26.2	5.1	9.5
4 TO 6	25.6	28.0	22.1	4.8	44.1	26.1
7 TO 9	23.2	24.4	9.0	9.5	32.2	21.5
10 TO 12	13.1	14.8	3.4	7.1	13.6	12.1
MORE THAN 12	4.9	6.3	2.8	2.4	1.7	4.7
NOT EMPLOYED	20.9	17.8	—	—	—	14.9
TOTAL* %	100	100	100	100	100	100
n.	449	332	145	42	59	1027

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

Waiting period between arrival to the host country and first employment was also affected by the time of migration. As the data in Table 5.6(b) show only about 28 per cent of the migrants who came before 1971 managed to find employment within three months after arriving to the host country. This proportion increased considerably after 1970, reaching almost 62 percent for the migrants who came between 1971 and 1975. After 1975 the proportion began to decline again. Thus in the period between 1976 and 1980 this proportion was 46 percent and after 1980 it declined sharply to reach nine per cent only of the migrants who came between 1981 and 1985. None of the migrants who came to the country after 1985 managed to find employment before a waiting period of at least four months.

TABLE 5.6(b)
WAITING PERIOD BETWEEN ARRIVAL IN THE U.A.E. AND
FIRST EMPLOYMENT BY YEAR OF MIGRATION (%)

WAITING PERIOD (IN MONTHS)	YEAR OF MIGRATION					TOTAL
	1966 TO 1970	1971 TO 1975	1976 TO 1980	1981 TO 1985	AFTER 1985	
LESS THAN 1	13.9	34.5	26.9	3.8	—	11.1
1 TO 3	13.9	27.3	20.8	5.2	—	9.5
4 TO 6	41.7	22.7	37.5	28.9	15.2	26.2
7 TO 9	19.4	9.1	10.2	32.7	21.7	21.5
10 TO 12	11.1	4.5	4.2	18.7	13.0	12.1
MORE THAN 12	—	1.8	0.5	10.8	2.5	4.7
NOT EMPLOYED	—	—	—	—	47.5	14.9
TOTAL* %	100	100	100	100	100	100
n.	36	110	216	343	322	1027

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

This finding may be explained by variations in the pace of development and modernization in the U.A.E. over the period. The sharp increase in the oil prices after the 1973 Middle East war produced substantial capital flows into the treasury of the U.A.E.. This enabled the government of the U.A.E. to adopt ambitious plans to develop the economy and to modernize the traditional communities of the country. Thus, in the period between 1973 and 1980 the process of modernization and development was at its peak. This situation created more employment opportunities in both the public and private sectors than were available before. After 1980, however, there was a steady slowdown in the oil based economy of the U.A.E. and the construction boom began to slow down year after year, reducing employment opportunities (for the waiting period for each year from 1966 to 1988 see Appendix 9).

6. Number of Jobs Taken by the Migrants

Like thousands of migrants from all over the world, the Keralites in the community under study had come to the U.A.E. in search of work. Almost all of them were engaged in unskilled and semiskilled jobs and employed in either the public or private sector. After having worked for several years in wage/salary employment, a few of them had established their own small businesses and become self-employed in various economic activities. The great majority of the migrants under study, however, had been in several jobs since they came to the host country and even in various

different types of work. In the following pages the job mobility of the migrants, the reason for such mobility as perceived by them and the role of relatives and friends in this process will be discussed.

Table 5.7 shows the distribution of the migrants who had been able to work by the number of jobs taken by them from their time of arrival to the time of the study. Almost 86 per cent of them had worked in more than one job. For some of the migrants, the number of jobs taken was as high as seven. Those who claimed to have been working in the same job since arrival in the U.A.E. constituted 14.2 per cent only. These, however, were either migrants who came to the U.A.E. between 1986 and 1987 (111 person or 12.7 per cent) or migrants whose first job was in the government sector (13 person or 1.5 per cent).

TABLE 5.7

**MIGRANTS BY NUMBER OF JOBS TAKEN SINCE
ARRIVAL IN THE HOST COUNTRY**

NUMBER OF JOBS TAKEN		NUMBERS	%
1	JOB	124	14.2
2	JOBS	235	26.9
3	JOBS	207	23.7
4	JOBS	156	17.8
5	JOBS	98	11.2
6	JOBS	35	4.0
7	JOBS	19	2.2
TOTAL		874	100

Various reasons were given by the migrants for moving from one job to another. Information obtained from the 65 migrants in the in-depth case studies - all of whom but one reported to have worked in more than one job - illustrates some of these reasons. Imtiyaz is a Muslim migrant who arrived in the host country in September 1975 with a visa bought by his brother Mahmood, who has been working in Abu Dhabi since 1972. He commented on the various jobs he was engaged in and the reasons for moving from one job to another in the following words:

... seven days after arriving in Abu Dhabi I found a job through one of my brother's friends in the harbour as tally clerk in a clearing and forwarding company. I was paid 35 Dirhams a day for 8 hours of work but more often I worked a few hours overtime. I was paid 5 Dirhams for one hour overtime. Thus, at the end of the month I wound up with 1,000 to 1,500 Dirhams. The company paid us only when the whole cargo was unloaded from the ship. At times when there was no ship to unload we stayed without a job but this rarely happened in those days.

I worked with this company for nearly six months and I was very happy with the job. I could have stayed in this job for a longer time had it had not been for the supervisor. Our supervisor was an Arab from Yemen who, for no apparent reason, always shouted at me and other Indian workers: "you stupid Indians," he would roar, "go back to your dirty country". I tried to be patient with him for a while but eventually I started shouting back at him. One day he went so far as to spit on my face, so I hit him and we started fighting. The harbour police interfered and I had to spend the rest of the day in confinement. The next day I went to work as usual to discover that I was no longer working for the company. The company paid me my dues and told me I was a troublemaker and the company did not want to employ such people.

I started searching for another job. Five months later I managed to find a job in a supermarket as a salesman for a monthly salary of 900 Dirhams. Four months later the owner of the supermarket told me that the business was not going well and that he had to reduce my salary to 600 Dirhams. I kept working in the supermarket but at the same time looked for a better paying job. I worked in the supermarket for another three months when a friend of mine found me a job in a labour-supplying company. I was sent off shore to work on one of the oil rigs but the work on the oil rig was so dangerous that I had to leave the job after seven weeks only in spite of the good salary of 1,400 Dirhams I was receiving.

I remained jobless for almost two months before I could find a job in a civil construction company as a store keeper for a salary of 850 Dirhams per month. But this job lasted for seven months only as the construction project has finished and so did my job. Once again I was jobless, but not for long. With the help of a Christian friend who was working as a site inspector in June Taylor and Sons, a consultant company, I managed to find a store keeper post with the Orient Construction Company. I worked with this company for five years. I was paid 1,350 Dirhams per month plus 150 Dirhams housing allowance and one month paid leave every year with an air ticket to Kerala and back.

In January 1981 I lost my job when the company decided to cut down the number of its employees. I thought I would go to Kerala for a month or two but I stayed there for nearly six months. My parents and I thought it was time for me to get married. Three months after my marriage I came back to Abu Dhabi and started looking for a job. Once again my Christian friend helped me find a job with the same company he was working for. He even managed to get me better terms than those of the previous job. I have been working for this company as assistant surveyor since July 1981. Now the company pays me a salary of 1,500 Dirhams per month, 300 Dirhams housing allowance, 30 days paid leave and an air ticket to Kerala and back every year.

Statements similar to this were reported by all but one of the migrants in the in depth-study. Yousuf, another

Muslim migrant, has worked in three jobs since he came to Abu Dhabi in 1980. He first worked as a labourer in one of the construction companies but left after two years for a better paying job in a maintenance company. Three and a half years later he lost this job as the company closed down. He remained without a job for nearly a year, then through the help of a relative who was working as caretaker in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs he was employed as a caretaker in the same ministry.

Working in the government sector seemed to be more attractive to the migrants than the private sector. Thirty five of the sixty four migrants who had worked in more than one job and eventually managed to work in the Government sector had not changed their job ever since. Employment in the government sector was seen by the migrants as more secure and as involving less laborious work, including less working hours and more holidays during the year, and most important, as better paying than similar jobs in the private sector⁽⁵⁾. A caretaker or a carpenter, for instance, in the government sector would work for seven or eight hours a day for a monthly salary far better than that he would obtain working for eight to twelve hours in the private sector. Moreover, migrants who were working in the government sector did not experience long delay before they received their wages, hence they were able to send some money to their families back home almost every month or so (see Chapter 6) whereas the Keralites who were working in the private sector

often complained about the lengthy wait before they received their wages. One migrants commented:

I worked for this construction company as a labourer for 13 months. In the first three months I was paid at the end of each month but after that I had to wait for four months before I recieved any payment and the next pay I recieved was after six months' waiting. When we talked to the supervisor he said that the company had not recieved any money from the government for the last six months but as soon as it recieved the money, we would be paid.

Except for four who at the time of the study were self employed, all of the migrants in the in-depth study who were working in the private sector expressed their desire to work in the government sector, and those who had managed to obtain work in the government sector were very pleased with their jobs. Yousuf, for example, expressed his point as follows:

I first worked for a construction company as a labourer. The work started from 7 am. to 5 pm. six days a week. I was paid 800 Dirhams a month and 28 days paid leave every two years. Working in construction is very hard in the hot weather of this country. Two years later I left this job for a better paying one in a maintenance company. Although the working hours were the same the work itself was much easier and my income increased by 150 Dirhams. Nonetheless, I have never felt secure working with these companies. They can always kick you out at any time and no one can do anything about it.

My cousin Kareem has been working as a caretaker in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for twelve years now and has no problem at all. His salary is very good, about 1,500 Dirhams. He works from half past seven in the morning to half past one in the afternoon. He found a part time job as a domestic helper in a house of an American family. He goes there four

days a week from 4 pm to 6 pm. He earns from this job an additional income of 500 Dirhams.

I asked my cousin many times to find me a caretaker job where he works and he eventually did. Now I am working with him in the same place. Although my salary is not as much as my cousin's I am very happy with this job. I can now find a parttime job, go to the Kerala Social Centre, visit my friend and relatives more often, go to Kerala every year and spend one month or so with my family there. What is more important is that this job is more or less permanent. As long as one does not do something really wrong while working, he can keep his job.

Working in the government sector was favoured not only by the unskilled migrants but also by those who claimed to have some skills. Dawood, for instance, has been working as driver for the last 10 years or so. He was recruited in April 1975 to work in a construction company as a labourer. Eighteen months later he became jobless as the project had been completed. He remained without a job for eight months. During this time he managed to get a local driving license and with the help of a friend he worked as private driver for a local family for a monthly salary of 600 Dirhams. He worked for this family for about nine months but did not like the job. "Every one in this family treated me as if I was his inherited slave," he claimed. He left this job to work as a driver in a modern bakery shop for a monthly salary of 700 Dirhams. Dawood expressed his wish to work in the government sector in these words:

I have been working in the bakery shop for almost ten years now. They pay me 950 Dirhams only. In ten years' time my salary has increased by 250 Dirhams only and when I ask them to raise my salary they say they cannot

afford it. Three of my friends found jobs in the Ministry of Defence. Salaries are quite good in the Ministry of Defence. One of my friends told me that he earned more than 4,000 Dirhams a month before the ministry cut down the salaries of all the foreign workers by more than one third. I asked my friends to find me a job in the Ministry of Defence. They told me it was not easy to get a job there but they would try their best. I thought, "I'll buy a car and make it a taxi," but as you know this was out of the question since only local people can own a taxi. I do not mind working as a caretaker or office boy in the government. Any job in the government sector would be better than any job I have taken up to this moment.

Only four migrants in the in depth case studies did not express any desire to work in the government sector. These, after having worked for several years in different jobs, had managed to establish themselves as self-employed. Three of the four, Mukhtar, Sultan and Aslam, were Muslim Keralites and had established themselves as petty traders. Mukhtar opened a small shop to sell fruit and Indian vegetables, Sultan opened a butcher shop and Aslam invested his savings in a small restaurant. The fourth, Kummar, was a Hindu who had established a photographic studio.

In short, the Keralites in Abu Dhabi had some difficulty in holding to one job. Their great mobility can be explained partly by the policies of some companies in the private sector to maximize their profits and partly by the desire of the migrants themselves to seek jobs with better pay and with better working conditions and less working hours. They had several resources to resort to in their search for new employment. Keralite migrants in Abu Dhabi

did their best to find , within varying periods of time, new employment for the unemployed fellow Keralite.

7. Employment Status of the Migrants

Although the Keralites in the community under study had come to the U.A.E. in search of work, nonetheless, at the time of the study, not all of them were employed. A relatively large proportion of more than 18 per cent (186 people) were still searching for a job. As we have seen, however, these were largely migrants who came to the country after 1985 (see Table 5.6(a) above). As the data in the following table suggest the great majority (76.2 per cent) of the migrants were employed on a wage/salary basis; 27.6 per cent in the government sector and 48.7 per cent in the public sector. A small proportion, of 5.6 per cent were self-employed' These findings are not dissimilar from the findings of other studies on migrants from the Indian Sub-continent. One study conducted in Kuwait on 500 migrants from the Indian sub-continent found that about 68 per cent were employed in the private sector, 28 per cent were employed in the public sector and 4 per cent were self-employed (Sen, 1986:445).

As the data in Table 5.8 indicate some differences were found among the three religious groups. Although the great majority in each religious group were employed on wage/salary basis, the proportion working in the government sector was larger in the Muslim group (31.6 per cent) than in the Hindu (2.3 per cent) and Christian groups (8.3 per

cent). A different situation was observed among the self-employed. While one fourth of the Christian group and almost 14 per cent of the Hindus were self-employed, only 4.2 per cent of the Muslims were in this category. None of the Christians were unemployed at the time of the study, whereas almost one tenth of the Hindus and nearly two tenths of the Muslims were looking for jobs.

TABLE 5.8

MIGRANTS BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND RELIGIOUS GROUP (%)

EMPLOYMENT STATUS	RELIGIOUS GROUP			TOTAL
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	
Employed on wage and salary basis (1+2)	76.2	76.7	75.0	76.2
1. In the government sector	31.6	2.3	8.3	27.6
2. In the private sector	44.6	74.4	66.7	48.7
Self-employed	4.2	13.5	25.0	5.6
Unemployed and not regularly employed	19.6	9.8	—	18.1
TOTAL %	100	100	100	100
n.	882	133	12	1027

The finding that a very small proportion of the Hindus and the Christians were found to be employed in the government sector suggests that discrimination in hiring practices may have been involved. Although discrimination against non-Muslims is not an overt policy of the U.A.E. Government, the information obtained from the following

statements made by three Hindu migrants in the in-depth case studies who believed they were discriminated against may suggest that the Government sector seems to favour Muslims over Hindus.

The first statement was that made by Vijay, a Hindu migrant who came to Abu Dhabi in 1980. He said that he applied for a driver's job in many government departments but never got the job. He expressed his experience as follows:

... I was jobless for almost five months when my friend and room mate Muzafer who is working in the municipality told me that there were a few jobs openings and that some drivers were needed. I went with him the next morning to the Municipality. He showed me where to go and to whom should I talk. So I went there and applied for a driver's job. The man in charge asked for a photocopy of my driving license and my passport, the release from my Kafeel and eight personal photographs. I had all of these ready with me. He took them and without examining them he put everything in an envelope and told me to check with him after one week. When I went to see him one week later he told me that he was sorry, I was not selected for the job. Two days later Muzafar told me that four people, two Arab Yemenis and two Keralites, had been employed as drivers. Although there was a general feeling among the Hindus that the government did not employ Hindus, I tried again and again, in the Municipality, in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, in the Ministry of Agriculture and finally in the Department of Electricity and Water, but I was turned down every time I applied for a job in the government sector.

The second statement was made by Sham, a Hindu migrant who although trained as a plumber was recruited in 1979 as a labourer for a construction company. Two years later he lost

his job as the company closed down. He commented on his experience with the government sector as follows:

... I was planning to go to Kerala for a few days when the company decided to close down, so I thought I must find myself a job and postponed my plane to go to Kerala to the next year. I started looking for a plumber job or even a labourer's job. Two months later I found a job through the help of my friend Ramaish who is also my room mate in another construction company. I worked with Ramaish in this company for nearly one year, after which we both lost our job as the company decided to reduce the number of its workers. The company gave us a release to work elsewhere. I went to Kerala for one month and when I came back Ramaish was still looking for a job.

One day he told me that there were job openings in the Public Works Department. He knew that from a Muslim friend working in that department. Ramaish and I went to this department where I applied for a plumber's job and Ramaish applied for a carpenter's job. We had all the needed papers with us. There were more than twenty-five people applying for different jobs but only three of us were seeking a plumber's job. They took our papers and told us to come the next day to complete the hiring procedures. When we went there the next morning they told us we were not selected but we could check with them in six months' time. A few days later Ramaish found out from his Muslim friend that two plumbers and one carpenter were employed in the department just four days after they have rejected us. Since that day I have never tried to find a job in the government sector.

A third set of comments were made by Gopal who arrived to the country in May 1981 through the help of a friend:

I did not possess any special skills. I have worked in various places since I came to Abu Dhabi. I worked in a cleaning company for two and a half years, then I left for a better paying job in a construction company but I left

this job again after seven months as the company cut down our wages by more than 30 per cent. A friend of mine helped me find a job in an automobile service station in Musafah. I have been working in this station since December 1984. Although my salary in the service station is 800 Dirhams (that is 150 Dirhams more than what I used to get in the cleaning company) the work in the service station is very hard, specially in the summer, and the working hours are very long; from half past seven in the morning to seven in the evening. I thought I'd better find myself a job in one of the government departments, any job, a caretaker or labourer. I asked all my Muslim friends who work in the government to inform me of any job opportunity and they did. I have applied in five places, the last of which was the Ministry of Health, as one of my friends told me they needed some caretakers and office assistants, but I never got the job. You see, I am convinced that a person like myself, a Hindu with no skills whatsoever, will never be able to get a job in the government. I realize there are a few Hindus working in the government but all of them are highly skilled and professionals.

These statements suggest that at least at the level of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, discriminatory tendencies against Hindus in the hiring process may have been practised. However, it is hard to say whether these incidents reflect a covert government policy or just individual attitudes on the part of those responsible for hiring semi-skilled and unskilled workers in the various government departments.

Some of the migrants (141 persons) at the time of the study, were engaged in a second job. These formed about 14 per cent of the migrants. The great majority (120 persons or 85.1 per cent) of them, however, were Muslims whose main job in the government sector provided them with free time to do

additional part-time jobs. The proportions of the Hindus and Christians who had additional jobs were relatively small, 13.5 per cent (13 persons) and 1.4 per cent (2 persons)

8. The Occupation of the Migrants

As the data in Table 5.9 below indicate, the great majority of the Keralites in the community under study who were employed at the time of the study were engaged in unskilled jobs⁽⁶⁾. These were mainly employed as care-takers, unskilled labourers, office assistants, domestic helpers etc. Those working in semi-skilled and skilled occupations constituted very small proportions, of 13.7 and 1.9 per cent respectively.

Table 5.9

MIGRANTS BY OCCUPATION AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION (%)

TYPE OF OCCUPATION	RELIGIOUS GROUPS			TOTAL
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	
UNSKILLED	86.0	77.5	58.3	84.4
SIMI-SKILLED	12.4	19.2	33.3	13.7
SKILLED	1.6	3.3	8.3	1.9
TOTAL*	%	100	100	100
	n.	709	120	841

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

As far as religious affiliations are concerned, the proportions in the skilled and semi-skilled categories were

the highest among the Christian group and the lowest among the Muslims, while that among the Hindus was somewhere in between (see Appendix 10 for the distribution of the migrants by occupation and religious affiliation).

Studies of migrants from the Indian Sub-Continent working in the Gulf States have pointed to a phenomenon of skill and occupation "down-grading". That is, migrants from the Indian sub-continent are normally engaged in occupations that do not reflect their actual skills or their occupations in their countries of origin. One study of migrants from the Indian sub-continent working in Kuwait reports that not only were the migrants disproportionately absorbed in semi-skilled and unskilled occupations, but they had been down-graded so that their occupation in the host country (in this case Kuwait) did not reflect their real level of skills and their former occupation in their home countries (in this case India, Pakistan and Bangladesh). Thus, while more than one third of the Indian sub-continent migrants working in Kuwait in 1983 were professional or technical workers in their country of origin, in Kuwait only one tenth of them were found in these categories and while the proportion engaged in skilled and semi-skilled clerical and manual jobs formed 44 per cent in the country of origin, this proportion jumped to almost eighty per cent in Kuwait (Sen, 1986:164-8).

Although the present study deals with a small segment of the Keralite migrants who were working in Abu Dhabi, some support for the above discussion seems to emerge from the

information obtained by this study. As noticed in Chapter 3, slightly over 1 per cent of the migrants interviewed were university graduates with degrees in engineering (3 persons), accounting (6 persons) and art (2 persons). Although these constitute a very small percentage, nonetheless, in the host country none of them was found to be working according to his specialization. Moreover, a large proportion (35.8 per cent) of the migrants who had had vocational training before migration were found to be working in jobs not only different from what they had been trained for, but that did not require any training at all, such as caretakers, office and shop assistants, waiters, etc..

9. The Working Day

Studies of migrant labour in some of the Gulf States suggest that migrants employed in unskilled and even semi-skilled occupations are compelled to work for more than the legally stipulated eight hours per day (The Arab Planning Institute, 1983; Al-Najar, 1983 and Sen, 1986). One study conducted on the workers of the cargo section in Al-shuwaik port in Kuwait found that they not only worked for 14 hours a day but were also forced to work for these long hours consecutively without any break (The Arab Planning Institute, 1983:27-30). Another study of 500 migrants from the Indian sub-continent found that the great majority (about 64 per cent) of them worked for more than eight hours per day, while about 28 per cent worked for more than 10

hours and 14 per cent worked more than 12 hours (Sen, 1986:445). Moreover, the study points out that nearly 60 per cent of the migrants claimed that they were forced to work during Fridays (the rest day) and public holidays and about 76 per cent did not receive any overtime payment (Sen, 1986:178).

Not dissimilar are the findings of this study, as the data in Table 5.10 illustrate. Almost 69 per cent of the migrants who were employed at the time of the study worked for more than eight hours per day, more than one fourth worked for more than 11 hours and 8.4 per cent worked for more than 14 hours. Those who worked for more than 14 hours, however, were mainly domestic helpers, shop assistants and self employed.

Table 5.10
MIGRANTS BY HOURS OF WORK PER DAY AND
SECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT (%)

HOURS OF WORK PER DAY	SECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT			TOTAL
	GOVERNMENT SECTOR	PRIVATE SECTOR	SELF- EMPLOYED	
8 HOURS	81.6	4.4	—	30.1
9 TO 11 HOURS	18.4	48.6	17.2	36.3
12 TO 14 HOURS	—	36.2	53.5	25.2
OVER 14 HOURS	—	10.8	29.3	8.4
TOTAL %	100	100	100	100
n.	283	500	58	841

Hours of work per day seemed to differ according to the sector of employment. Thus, while the great majority (almost 82 per cent) of those employed in the government sector worked only for the legally stipulated eight hours per day almost 86 per cent of those working in the private sector worked for more than eight hours, about 47 of them working for 12 hours or more and almost 11 per cent worked for more than 14 hours. All of the self-employed worked for more than eight hours and the great majority of them (about 83 per cent) worked for more than 11 hours. Some of the self-employed worked as long as 16 hours a day, seven days a week, as illustrated by the following statement by Mukhtar.

I came to Abu Dhabi in 1974 and worked in many places as a labourer, an office assistant and a waiter. My last job was as a shop assistant in a fruit and vegetable shop owned by a Keralite. His name was Habeeb, a fifty-two year old Muslim who had been working in Abu Dhabi for eighteen years or so. One day he received a letter from his elder brother in Kerala informing him of the death of his wife. Habeeb was very sad because he had not seen his wife for almost three years. ... He decided to sell the shop and go home for good. ... so I bought the shop from him for 20,000 Dirhams; 11,000 for everything that was in the shop and 9,000 for the next six months' rent that he had paid in advance. This was in 1984. The problem was to get his sleeping partner to agree to the new arrangement. The sleeping partner was a local man who received a lucrative sum of 1,500 Dirhams a month just for his name as a Kafeel and a sleeping partner. We went to see him in his home. Habeeb told him about his wife and his decision and that I would be running the shop and would pay him the same amount every month. At first he wanted to raise the amount to 2,000 Dirhams a month but we convinced him that this was out of the question ... but he insisted on getting 5,000 Dirhams to change the shop license and to be my Kafeel. After

wheeling and dealing with him he agreed to take 3,000 Dirhams.

I have been running this shop for almost four years now. I used to make a good earning but now things are getting worse, too many fruit and vegetable shops have opened in this neighborhood. The rent of the shop has increased, when I first bought the shop the rent was 18,000 Dirhams a year but now it is 24,000 payable in advance. My partner does not care, he wants his 1,500 every month. I have to pay about 400 Dirhams a month for electricity, the rent of my accommodation is 300 Dirhams a month and 300 Dirhams goes on food. I send 1,000 to 1,500 Dirhams a month to my family and my parents in Kerala. You see I need to make at least 6,000 Dirhams a month to keep this shop going. To make this kind of money I just have to work hard. I start at seven o'clock in the morning and close at eleven o'clock at night. I have my meals in the shop. The only time I close the shop during the day is on Friday for one hour to attend the Friday prayer in the mosque. You know, I used to have someone helping me from 4 p.m to 8 pm for a monthly payment of 300 Dirhams but now I cannot afford to have a helper.

The other three self-employed in the in-depth case studies, Aslam, Sultan and Kummar, reported more or less similar experiences in their small businesses.

Nonetheless, it is those employed on a wage or salary basis in the private sector who suffer most. Although nearly 86 per cent of them worked for more than the legally stipulated 8 hours only a few of them (about 18 per cent or 86 migrants) reported to have received overtime payments. The worst working conditions of all were those experienced by Keralites who worked as domestic helpers in the households of either locals or foreigners. One of the many domestic helpers was Mudi, a Muslim young man who came to the U.A.E. in 1982 with the help of his brother-in-law who

worked in the army as a cook. His brother-in-law managed with the help of a major in the army to obtain a visa for him. Mudi worked as domestic helper in four households. He lost his first, second, and third jobs when his employers imported female domestic helpers from the Philippines. His brother-in-law managed to find him a domestic helper job at the household of the same major who helped him get the visa. Mudi expressed the daily routine of his job in this house, which was not different from the other households he had worked for before, as follows:

When my brother-in-law told me that I was going to work in the house of a major in the army as cook, I was frightened. I have been working in this house like a slave from six o'clock in the morning to ten at night. I start at six a.m. by making tea and Arabian coffee, then I water the garden. After that I prepare breakfast for all of the household; four children, the major, his wife and his old father. The breakfast consists of "pury" or "chapati" (two kinds of Indian bread), or "mhalla" (a local bread), all of which are made by me, fried and boiled eggs and "keema" (minced meat with green peas). First I serve the children and their father as they need to go to their schools and his job, then, cleaning after them, I serve the major's wife and his father. After that I vacuum clean the whole six-bedroom house and clean the three bath rooms.

At about eleven o'clock I make myself a quick breakfast and start preparing the lunch. Lunch involves making fish, chicken or meat and rice. The hardest of all is the fish and rice as it involves cleaning the fish. You know, some fish such as "she'ery" and "hamoor" are very difficult to clean. Sometimes I have to fry or grill forty or fifty small fish. Fish and rice is their main dish for lunch, four or five days a week. Usually they ask for another dish beside the fish and rice, such as chicken or mutton curry. By two o'clock the lunch must be served. After serving the lunch I go back to the kitchen to make tea and coffee and have it

ready to be served after lunch. After lunch they usually take a nap, but not me. I clean all the dishes, eat my lunch, put the dirty clothes in the washing machine and then wash the cars. Washing the cars is an every-other-day job. The major has two cars. After this I take the clothes from the washing machine and hang them in the garden to dry. Then, at about half past seven p.m. I start preparing for the dinner, which involves making bread and some hot dishes such as curry or liver. After serving the dinner and washing the dishes I start ironing some of the clothes I have washed earlier. At ten o'clock I take some dinner and go to bed in my small room in one corner of the garden, only to wake up the next morning and go through the same things again and again. Usually I don't sleep there. I prefer to come here and go there in the morning. For me, every day is the same; even Friday, "the rest day" is not a rest day for me.

I have been working in this house for almost three years now. My salary was 400 Dirhams a month, increased to 450 in the second year and to 500 in the third year. I am very tired of working as a domestic helper, it is domestic slavery. I have discussed the matter with my brother-in-law and asked him to help me get a release from the major so I can find myself another job. He said that he did not want to make the major angry as his job in the army was at stake.

10. Summary

This chapter has attempted to shed some light on the working conditions experienced by the unskilled and semi-skilled Keralites in the U.A.E. As far as working conditions are concerned, the findings of this study are not dissimilar to the findings of other studies of migrant labour in other Gulf States (Al-Najar, 1983; Sen, 1986 and Arab Planning Institute, 1983).

Reliance on relatives and friends in finding employment in the host country on the one hand, and the legal and

political restrictions imposed on the migrants on the other, resulted in various problems and difficulties which the migrants had to face. Since the great majority of the Keralites under investigation had entered the host country through informal channels (relatives and friends) they had not secured employment prior to migration. Although a small proportion of the Keralites under study claimed that they had made arrangement for jobs before coming to the U.A.E., nonetheless, not all of them succeeded in getting the job they were recruited for, either because they were recruited by relatives and friends on the basis of merely anticipated vacancies or because they were recruited by irresponsible agencies for non-existing firms and companies. The great majority (84 per cent) of the migrants depended on their relatives and friends to find employment.

Although networks of relatives and friends played an important role in finding jobs for the newcomers, it also resulted in a long waiting time between arrival in the host country and entry into employment. During such a long waiting period, which in many cases extended to over 12 months, migrants had to rely on relatives and friends for accommodation, food and financial assistance.

The institutionalization of the Kafeel system in the host country, coupled with the absence of a legal trade union, has given employers great power to exploit their expatriate workers and at the same time weakened the position of the migrants, who for fear that they will lose

their jobs, or even be deported if they complain, submit to such injustice and exploitation. This was reflected in the great mobility of the migrants and the difficulty of holding to one job, as a result of the policies adopted by firms and companies in the private sector to reduce the number of their workers from time to time or to dismiss all the workers once a project was finished. This also was reflected in the "down-grading" of skills and occupation of the migrants, long working hours with no overtime payment, and low wages.

Nonetheless, some of the migrants had succeeded in utilizing the personal relationship between themselves and their kafeels and employers to get round the legal procedures and regulations and take more than one job, to change jobs and kafeels, to obtain visas for their friends and relatives and to correct the legal positions of the illegal migrants.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Choldin, 1973; Tilly and Brown, 1974; Browning and Feindt, 1971; Stromberg et. all., 1974; Abu-Loughod, 1961; and Mustafa, 1990.
2. The name and rank were omitted from the text as requested by the respondent
3. In spite of the assurance on the part of the researcher, Mehfooz and Kamal refused to give more information regarding this issue.
4. Musafah is an industrial area situated in the main land about 5 kilometers to the south of Abu Dhabi City.
5. That employment in the government sector is relatively more secure, involves less working hours etc. and that nationals are concentrated in this sector whereas non-nationals are overwhelmingly concentrated in the private sector, are common characteristics in all labour importing countries of the Gulf. See for example Sen, 1986 and Arab Planning Institute, 1983.
6. Unskilled occupation is defined as occupation which requires no special training or education, semi-skilled occupation is that which needs literacy and some training and skilled occupation is that demands literacy and vocational training.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE MIGRANTS: EARNINGS, EXPENDITURES, SAVINGS AND REMITTANCES

1. Introduction

Some studies of the Indian migrants working in the Gulf countries have argued that although the cost of living in the Gulf states is very high, migrants from India are able to save and remit a substantial proportion of their earnings (Nair, 1986b:88 and Government of Kerala, 1987:21). The calculation is that because the employment contracts of the migrants entitle them to free accommodation, free or highly subsidized food and transportation and free medical facilities they are able to save and remit about one-third to one-half of their income (Weiner, 1982:13). This may apply to a small minority of migrants whose rights are protected by some arrangements made between the government of the sending and receiving countries, or to professional and highly skilled migrants whose contracts contain officially defined terms which are respected by employers; but it does not apply to the great majority of migrants (Owen, 1985:11).

As was discussed earlier, the vast majority of the migrants under study came to the U.A.E. through informal channels (relatives and friends) without entering into formal written contracts. Even those who came to the U.A.E.

through recruiting agencies or through direct application to an employer did not receive what was stipulated in their contracts. Moreover, the vast majority of the migrants have changed their Kafeels and jobs which means that they were recruited locally, often informally and on new terms that not only deprived them any accommodation provided by the employer, but also considerably reduced their wages and other benefits. The medical services and facilities which were, prior to 1983, free to all of the country's population, must now be paid for by all expatriates⁽¹⁾.

Expatriates in Abu Dhabi come from so many different Arab and non Arab countries and work at so many different occupation levels and under so many different conditions that any generalized conclusion is difficult. However, one might argue with Owen, that the great majority of the migrants (particularly those engaged in semi-skilled and unskilled occupations) share a lack of protection and are totally dependent on the good will of their institutional or individual kafeel (1985:11). It is the view of this researcher, that the lack of protection due to the institutionalization of the kafeel system, the absence of legally stipulated working conditions and minimum wages coupled with the high cost of living in Abu Dhabi are the main factors generating the unfavourable living conditions of the migrants. Keralites who were engaged in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs were forced to adopt a way of life (living in large numbers in one house and even in one room, eating collectively, and avoiding any unnecessary expenditures (see

Chapter 7). It is the way of life adopted by these Keralites which enables them to minimize their expenditures and to maximize their savings and remittances. In the following pages an attempt will be made to draw a general picture of what the migrants under study earned, spent, saved and remitted back home to their families.

2. Earnings of the Migrants

The problems involved in calculating and estimating the migrants' earnings, savings and remittances are enormous. Not only are some of the migrants unlikely to reveal information regarding these matters (Nair, 1986a:95) but also migrants can, and in many instances do, increase their basic wages by working overtime or having another job beside their main job (Owen, 1985:6). Another set of problems which the present researcher encountered in estimating the exact income of the migrants was a rather complicated matter. First, as has been observed in the preceding pages, almost 86 per cent of the migrants had worked in more than one and up to seven different jobs. The earnings of these migrants varied from one job to another. Imtiyaz, for instance, earned from 1,000 to 1,500 Dirhams per month from his first job as tally clerk in the harbour, but 900 Dirhams from his second job in the supermarket, reduced to 600 Dirhams just before he resigned. He was paid 1,400 Dirhams for his third job, 850 Dirhams for his fourth and 1,350 Dirhams for his fifth, plus 150 Dirhams housing allowance and one month paid leave with a return air ticket to Kerala and back. He got an even better income from

his sixth job which earned him 1,500 Dirhams plus 300 Dirhams housing allowance plus the other benefits he had received in his fifth job.

Second, the migrants had not been employed all the time. We have seen that the waiting period between arrival in Abu Dhabi and first employment was more than twelve months for some migrants. Moreover, although the Keralites did their best to help those out of work find new employment, an out-of-work migrant often remained unemployed for quite some time before he found a new job. Shakoor, for example, came to Abu Dhabi in November 1978 but was employed for the first time in October 1979; eleven months later. He remained jobless for about three months between his first and second jobs, stayed without employment for almost seven months between the second and third jobs, and was out of work for five months between his third and fourth jobs. Thus, the total time Shakoor had spent jobless to date amounted to 26 months.

For these reasons the monthly earnings of the migrants who were employed at the time of the study and therefore had more or less regular earnings will be used to give a general idea of the income members of this group can hope to achieve. As Table 6.1(a) shows, only 841 migrants had regular monthly income at the time of the study. These constituted about 82 per cent of the Keralites under study. The other 18.1 per cent (186 migrants) were either unemployed and, therefore, had no regular income (these

formed 8.6 per cent or 88 migrants) or casually engaged in miscellaneous menial jobs which provided them with a small irregular income of 150 to 200 Dirhams a month (these formed 9.5 per cent or 98 migrants).

TABLE 6.1(a)
REGULARLY EMPLOYED MIGRANTS BY
MONTHLY INCOME

MONTHLY INCOME (IN DIRHAMS)*	NUMBERS	%
1,000 OR LESS	395	47.0
1,100 TO 1,500	249	29.6
1,600 TO 2,000	91	10.8
2,100 TO 2,500	63	7.5
2,600 TO 3,000	34	4.0
OVER 3,000	9	1.1
TOTAL	841	100

* Income is estimated to the nearest 100 Dirhams

2.1. Earnings from the Main Job

Almost as many as half of the migrants who were regularly employed at the time of the study had a low income of 1,000 Dirhams⁽²⁾ or less per month, as shown in Table 6.1(a). Almost 30 per cent had a monthly income of 1,000 to 1,500 Dirhams and slightly over one tenth earned an income between 1,600 and 2,000. Moving to the higher income categories one finds that the proportion gets smaller and smaller, to reach barely over one per cent in the income category of over than 3,000. These findings mean that almost

all of these migrants were not legally entitled to bring their families to Abu Dhabi even if they wanted to, since their monthly income was less than the legally stipulated minimum of 4,000 Dirhams per month.

These findings are not dissimilar from the results of other studies. One report of a survey on the utilization of the remittances from 433 Keralites who had returned to Kerala after working in the Gulf States for several years showed that more than 46 per cent of them had monthly earnings of less than 2,000⁽³⁾ Indian Rupees (Government of Kerala, 1987:35). Another study reported that about 53 per cent of the 610 Keralites returned from the Gulf States received less than 2,000 Rupees per month from their wage/salary (Nair, 1986a:96).

TABLE 6.1(b)

REGULARLY EMPLOYED MIGRANTS BY MONTHLY INCOME
AND THE SKILL LEVEL OF OCCUPATION (%)

MONTHLY INCOME (IN DIRHAMS)	SKILL LEVEL OF OCCUPATION			TOTAL
	UNSKILLED	SEMI- SKILLED	SKILLED	
1,000 OR LESS	55.6	—	—	47.0
1,100 TO 1,500	32.8	13.9	—	29.6
1,600 TO 2,000	8.6	26.1	—	10.8
2,100 TO 2,500	2.4	37.4	18.8	7.5
2,600 TO 3,000	0.6	20.0	43.8	4.0
OVER 3,000	—	2.6	37.5	1.1
TOTAL* %	100	100	100	100
n.	710	115	16	841

* Totals may not add up to 100 because of rounding

The monthly income of the migrants varied according to the skill level of their jobs. As Table 6.1(b) indicates almost 56 per cent of those employed in unskilled occupations had an income of 1,000 Dirhams or less per month; all of those in semi-skilled occupations had an income of 1,100 Dirhams or more per month, and all of the migrants employed in skilled occupations had a monthly income of more than 2,000 Dirhams.

As noticed in the preceding chapter, however, the income of the migrants was affected by the sector in which they were employed. A labourer in the government sector was paid 50 to 100 per cent more (depending on which government sector he was employed by) than his counterpart in the private sector. Husain, Abdulkareem and Abdulsatar, for example, were employed as pesticide labourers in the Ministry of Defence, in the Ministry of Health and in a private company respectively. Husain had a monthly income of 2,800 Dirhams, Abdulkareem was paid 1,400 Dirhams per month and Abdulsatar earned merely 950 Dirhams. Thus it will be more revealing to consider the income of the migrants in terms of the employment sector.

Those who at the time of the study were self-employed seemed to be best off as the data in Table 6.1(c) show. All of them had a monthly income of more than 1,500 Dirhams, almost 88 per cent of them had an earning of more than 2,000 Dirhams per month and more than 36 per cent earned over 2,500 per month. A point worth noting here is that the

income figures for the self-employed represent net income only. Mukhtar, whose experience was mentioned in the preceding chapter, earned 6,000 Dirhams per month on average but most of it went for the rent of the shop and undeservedly to the Kafeel and the sleeping partner. Similarly, the other three self-employed in the in-depth study, Sultan, Aslam, and Kumar, told with bitterness how they had been working hard but that the legally institutionalized Kafeel and local partner legally required to establish any business in the country, coupled with ever-increasing rents, appropriated the larger portion of their earnings.

TABLE 6.1(c)

**REGULARLY EMPLOYED MIGRANTS BY MONTHLY INCOME
AND EMPLOYMENT SECTOR (%)**

MONTHLY INCOME (IN DIRHAMS)	EMPLOYMENT SECTOR			TOTAL
	GOVERNMENT SECTOR	PRIVATE SECTOR	SELF- EMPLOYED	
1,000 OR LESS	24.7	65.0	—	47.0
1,100 TO 1,500	46.0	23.8	—	29.6
1,600 TO 2,000	17.7	5.6	22.4	10.8
2,100 TO 2,500	7.4	3.6	41.4	7.5
2,600 TO 3,000	4.2	2.0	20.7	4.0
OVER 3,000	—	—	15.5	1.1
TOTAL %	100	100	100	100
TOTAL n.	283	500	58	841

Although not as good as those of the self-employed the monthly earnings of those employed in the government sector

seemed to be generally better than those of migrants in the private sector. More than three fourths of those in the government sector had an income of 1,100 Dirhams or more whereas the majority (65 per cent) of those working in the private sector had an income of 1,100 Dirhams or less. Although the proportion of migrants decreased in each higher income category for both the government and private sector, the proportion in the higher categories was greater for those in the government.

TABLE 6.1(d)
REGULARLY EMPLOYED MIGRANTS BY MONTHLY INCOME
AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION (%)

MONTHLY INCOME (IN DIRHAMS)	RELIGIOUS GROUPS			TOTAL
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	
1,000 OR LESS	46.7	52.5	8.3	47.0
1,100 TO 1,500	30.3	25.8	25.0	29.6
1,600 TO 2,000	10.9	10.8	8.3	10.8
2,100 TO 2,500	7.0	8.3	25.0	7.5
2,600 TO 3,000	4.1	1.7	25.0	4.0
OVER 3,000	1.0	0.8	8.3	1.1
TOTAL*	%	100	100	100
	n.	709	120	841

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

Generally speaking, the Christian migrants in the community under study seemed to be best off in terms of monthly income. As Table 6.1(d) shows, the majority (67 per cent) of the Christian migrants earned a monthly income of

more than 1,500 Dirhams. The positions of the Muslims and the Hindus were more or less the same with about 77 percent of the Muslims and 78 per cent of the Hindus having an income of 1,500 Dirhams or less per month.

2.2. Additional Income

Although the vast majority of the migrants expressed a desire to get an additional job to supplement their earnings only some of them (141 persons), mainly among those working in the government sector, managed to find themselves a part time job beside their principal one. These formed about 17 per cent of the regularly employed migrants. The great majority (120 persons) of them were Muslims mainly employed in the government sector, 19 persons were Hindus and 2 were Christians. The distribution of the additional income of these migrants is summarized in Table 6.2.

TABLE 6.2

**REGULARLY EMPLOYED MIGRANTS BY ADDITIONAL MONTHLY INCOME
AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION (%)**

ADDITIONAL INCOME (IN DIRHAMS)	RELIGIOUS GROUPS			TOTAL
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	
LESS THAN 200	35.0	36.8	—	34.8
200 TO 400	54.2	52.6	—	53.2
MORE THAN 400	10.8	10.5	100	12.0
TOTAL* %	100	100	100	100
n.	120	19	2	141

* Totals may not add up to 100 because of rounding

The two Christian Keralites, a little more than one tenth of the Muslim and an almost equivalent proportion of the Hindus earned an additional income of more than 400 Dirhams per month. There were no real differences observed between the Hindus and the Muslims in regard to their additional income.

The source of the additional income, however, varied considerably. Kareem and Kasim, for instance, worked as part time domestic helpers. Kareem worked for an American family for a monthly payment of 500 Dirhams and Kasim worked for a local family for 400 Dirhams. Sulayman also worked as domestic helper but for two different families. He worked from half past two p.m. to half past four p.m. for a Libyan family, for a monthly payment of 200 Dirhams, and from five to half past six for a Lebanese family for a payment of 150 Dirhams. Matthew, a Christian migrant, worked three hours a day as a typist and office assistant for a maintenance company. He was paid 450 Dirhams per month. Rajo, a Hindu Keralite, found himself a part time job selling tickets in a third class cinema for 200 Dirhams a month. Jalal, who worked for eight hours a day in a petrol station, bought himself a typewriter, a chair and a small table and started his own part time job typing letters of all sorts for those who needed them. He joined the many other migrants a visitor to the main post office or the Ministry of Labour can see sitting at their small tables, shouting to attract customers. They charge five to ten Dirhams per letter. Jalal's income from this job varied from day to day but on

average he made 300 Dirhams a month. Other Keralites utilized their free time by selling ice-cream, soft drinks and roasted peanuts in the market place and on the beaches, and yet others cleaned cars.

3. Monthly Expenditure

Migrants have several incentives to spend as little as possible and to save as much as they can. The great majority of the migrants under study had spent a great deal of money to come to the U.A.E. incurring debts at home or selling property and jewellery (see Chapter 4). Moreover, although the migrants plan to stay in the host country for as long as possible they nonetheless consider their employment to be temporary and that sooner or later they will go back to Kerala where there is "joli illa", no employment. They, therefore, view their employment in the U.A.E. as probably their only opportunity to work hard and make the savings that will enable them to fulfil their obligations towards their families, and perhaps to start some business at home.

During the time of the study there were at least 12 persons who did not contribute to the costs of housing and food, simply because they were unemployed and their relatives or friends were unable to support them. These were regarded as guests by the rest of the migrants living in the same room. Keralites in the community under study looked at the issue of hosting and helping a friend, a fellow villager or even just a Keralite who had recently arrived in the host country or who had lost his job, as an obligation; a duty of

those who have come before them. Hajji - whom we first met in Chapter 4 as Jamal's friend and companion in the launch adventure to Dubai - commented on hosting a fellow villager as follows:

When Jamal and I reached Dubai we did not know anybody there. We were depending on other Keralites in Dubai.... We tried to locate Mr. Ahmed Shah, a Keralite who, we were told in Kerala, owned a bakery shop in Dubai and would help us find accommodation and even jobs. After searching for a few hours we found the place. We told Mr. Shah that we had just arrived from Kerala by launch and that we were very tired and had no money. It was late afternoon and the workers were busy making bread but he called one of them and told him to take us to the apartment above the bakery shop. It was a very small two-bedroom apartment Mr. Shah rented for his six workers, all of whom were Keralites and four of whom were related to Mr. Shah.

We stayed with them for almost two months, after which Mr. Shah managed to find a waiter's job in a small restaurant for one of us; so Jalal and I decided that Jalal should take the job. Jalal moved to live with some 23 Keralites in a four-room house I waited for another month before I could find a job as labourer in a construction company, also through the help of Mr. Shah. So I went to live with Jalal.

During our stay with Mr. Shah's employees we did not share the cost of the food and they did not expect us to do so, simply because we did not have any money; on the contrary they used to lend us money from time to time. Similarly, two years later when I left the company along with a few other workers, as the company stopped paying our wages for three months, I went to Abu Dhabi where I was hosted by six Keralites from my village who also helped me find a job in the army as a caretaker. I stayed with them for nearly three months before I got a job and shared with them the cost of the rent and food. You see, here we have to take care of each other in order to survive.

As Table 6.3(a) shows more than 52 per cent of the Keralites in the community under study spent between 301 and 400 Dirhams per month on housing, food and other miscellaneous expenditures such as transportation, pocket money, entertainment, etc.. A little more than one fourth spent 300 Dirhams or less per month. Almost as many as two thirds (174 persons) of these were unemployed at the time of the study or casually engaged in irregular miscellaneous jobs. A little less than one fifth spent between 401 and 500 Dirhams and a little more than 2 per cent spent more than 500 Dirhams. The largest amount spent by any Keralite was 600 Dirhams per month.

TABLE 6.3(a)
MIGRANTS BY MONTHLY EXPENDITURES

MONTHLY EXPENDITURE (in Dirhams)	NUMBERS	%
300 or LESS	272	26.8
301 to 400	531	52.3
401 to 500	189	18.6
501 to 600	23	2.3
TOTAL	1015	100

Generally speaking expenditures in the host country did not vary significantly by earning level. As Table 6.3(b) indicates the great majority of the migrants in all income categories but one spent between 301 and 400 Dirhams per

month. The exception was those who were unemployed at the time of the study or were engaged only in miscellaneous casual jobs. The migrants in this category (174 persons) can be divided economically into three sub-groups. The first sub-group constituted of the 43 migrants who had never been employed since their arrival to the host country. Forming 24.7 percent of the group, they had no income whatsoever. They depended mainly on their relatives and friends and the generosity of their fellow villagers. Mohideen, for example, who had come to Abu Dhabi in December 1987 on a visa bought by his elder brother but had not found any job up to the time of the study, shared a room with his elder brother and four other fellow villagers. Their shares in the cost of the rent and food were paid by his brother.

TABLE 6.3(b)
MIGRANTS BY MONTHLY EXPENDITURES AND MONTHLY EARNINGS (%)

MONTHLY INCOME (IN DIRHAMS)	MONTHLY EXPENDITURES (IN DIRHAMS)				TOTAL % n.	
	300 OR LESS	301 TO 400	401 TO 500	501 TO 600		
NO INCOME AND IRREGULAR INCOME	63.8	36.2	—	—	100	174
1,000 OR LESS	21.0	58.5	20.5	—	100	395
1,100 TO 1,500	24.5	50.2	23.7	1.6	100	249
1,600 TO 2,000	12.1	62.6	19.8	5.5	100	91
2,100 TO 2,500	8.0	49.2	31.7	11.1	100	63
2,600 TO 3,000	2.9	55.9	26.5	14.7	100	34
OVER 3,000	—	55.6	22.2	22.2	100	9
TOTAL	26.8	52.3	18.6	2.3	100	1015

The second sub-group (98 migrants) was formed by those who did not have regular employment but were engaged in casual miscellaneous jobs which provided them with small irregular earnings, barely enough to pay for their shares in the rent of the room and food. Zahid, a 21 year old Muslim from the district of Malappuram, was one such case. He explained his situation as follows:

I came to this country in August 1987 and I have been looking for a job since then. During the first two months or so I shared a room with a friend and seven other Keralites. As you see the room is overcrowded but we are still prepared to host a friend or relative if he desperately needs shelter. I was provided with shelter when I needed it and I would provide it for any Keralite who needs it; and if you ask any Keralite he would tell you the same thing. You see, a place which is large enough for five people is also large enough for six, and that which accommodates six may accommodate seven; and food cooked for four is enough for five. Nonetheless, to sit and do nothing is a sign of laziness and irresponsibility, so I decided to do something and earn some money, at least until I find a regular job. In the mornings I search for a job. I have contacted many firms and companies. I have approached even the small shops but so far with no luck. In the afternoons I work as "hammali"⁽⁴⁾, a porter, in the fruit and vegetable market. I make from 100 to 150 Dirhams a month but sometimes I make more. At least now I can share the cost of the accommodation and food with my room-mates.

A similar statement was made by Sajed, a Muslim from the District of Trichur. He came to the U.A.E. in January 1988. Like Zahid, He could not find a permanent job. He worked as a porter in the fruit and fish markets but did not like it,

so he started selling bananas by the dozen. He commented on this as follows:

... It is very hard to get a permanent job in Abu Dhabi these days. Everybody tells me that I should have not come, but I did. You know, coming to Abu Dhabi took all my parents' savings and my mother's gold jewelry. I just cannot afford to go back now. I have to stay and work in whatever job I find Searching for a permanent job for nearly three months and failing to find one, I worked as a hammali. You know, there is no shame in work. I came here to work and send some money to my family I worked for two months as hammali in the fish market and in the fruit market. In the morning I started at the fish market where I and other hammalis would carry cartons and follow the customers. When a customer bought some fish I would ask him if he needed a hammali and if he said yes I would carry the fish to his car and he would pay me some money. There is no fixed amount. Most of the customers would pay me two Dirhams but sometimes a generous customer would give me five Dirhams. Sometimes I followed a customer for nearly half an hour but he would just go without buying any fish and I would go searching for another customer. ... In the afternoon I worked in the fruit market carrying the fruit and the vegetables bought by the customers to their cars. You see, the work itself was not particularly hard but the people, specially non-local Arabs, were brutal and cruel; they often insult and call me names and sometimes even hit me. One day I was carrying four mans⁽⁵⁾ of fish for a Syrian or maybe a Jordanian, I don't know, when suddenly the carton in which I was carrying the fish broke and the fish fell down to the ground. The customer turned towards me and pushed me very hard and started shouting at me in Arabic. So I decided to sell bananas at the entrance of the fruit market.

Selling fruit at the entrances of the fruit market has become the domain of the jobless Keralites. Almost all of those who sell fruit by the dozen at the entrances of the fruit market are Keralites. They buy a box or two of any

fruit from a wholesale shop and resell the contents by the dozen. Sajid made from 5 to 15 Dirhams a day depending on how many boxes of bananas he sold.

The third sub-group (33 persons) were those who had worked regularly for some time but for one reason or another had lost their job. These migrants had been drawing on their savings to pay for their shares of the accommodation and food, but some had consumed all their savings and started to borrow from their relatives or friends. Vijay, after giving up hope of finding a driver's job in the government sector, worked as a labourer in four different private firms. In November 1984 Vijay managed, by the help of a friend of his room mate and friend Muzafar, to find a driver's post in a construction company. He worked for this company for almost three years. But in October 1987 he lost his job through redundancy, and thereafter he remained jobless. He shared a room with his friend Muzafar and three more Keralites. Vijay commented:

I saved some money from my last job. I have never spent more than 300 Dirhams. You know, I do not smoke or spend on unnecessary things. I used to make about 900 Dirhams a month in my last job. I sent 350 Dirhams each month to my family in Kerala and paid 150 Dirhams as my share in the rent of the room; 100 Dirhams went for food, 50 Dirhams for transportation and pocket-money and the rest, 250 Dirhams I deposited in my account in the bank to be used in days like these, to pay for a new Kafeel if I needed one and to pay for my air ticket when I go to Kerala. I saved nearly 8,000 Dirhams. I have been spending from these savings since October last year and if I do not find another job all of my savings will be consumed in this way.

3.1. Minimizing Expenditures through Housing Arrangements

Expenditure in the host country is strongly influenced by accommodation costs. As is the case in all capital cities, housing in Abu Dhabi is very expensive and consumes a large proportion of the average income, let alone the low income typical of semi-skilled and unskilled migrants. This situation forces those with low incomes to live in over-crowded living conditions, and this was precisely the case of the unskilled and semi-skilled Keralites under study. Living in over-crowded houses and sharing rooms between as many people as a room can accommodate, was the only way for these Keralites to reduce their expenditure sufficiently to allow them to send a part of their income to their families in Kerala and to save some money for future use on their return to Kerala. As Hajji commented:

There is no alternative. None of us can rent a single room on his own, let alone a house; not only because we can not afford to do so - indeed some of us can - but because we want to send some of our income back home for our families and save as much as we can. We have too many responsibilities back home. We are not going to live in this country for ever and whether we like it or not one day we are going to leave this country and go back home

Although the Keralites under investigation lived in over crowded houses and chock-full rooms, paying for accommodation in some cases as little as 100 Dirhams or less per month, this item was seen by many of them as consuming a large proportion of their meagre earnings. As the data in

Table 6.4(a) above show, more than two fifths spent more than 200 Dirhams per month on housing and some of them (slightly more than 2 per cent) spent more than 300 Dirhams. The rest of the migrants (59 per cent) spent 200 Dirhams or less. Although the amounts may seem very small, for some of them , this represented one fourth to one third of their monthly income, while for others it consumed between one third to one half of their earnings.

TABLE 6.4(a)
DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS BY
HOUSING EXPENSES

HOUSING EXPENSES PER MONTH (IN DIRHAMS)	NUMBER OF PERSONS	%
100 or LESS	149	14.7
101 TO 150	177	17.4
151 TO 200	273	26.9
201 TO 250	241	23.7
251 TO 300	154	15.2
OVER 300	21	2.1
TOTAL	1015	100

The rent of the houses in which these migrants lived varied according to the size of the house and the number and size of the rooms. Nonetheless, the amount paid by each person depended mainly on the number of persons sharing the same room. The total rent of a house was not shared equally by all those living in the house; rather the rent of each

room in the house, which is determined by the size of the room, was more or less equally shared by the migrants occupying it. Thus, the larger the number living in a room the smaller the amount paid by each of them. As Table 6.4(b) indicates a little more than 93 per cent of the migrants among those living in relatively less crowded rooms of 2 to 3 persons, spent the comparatively large amount of between 251 to 350 Dirhams per month for housing. As one moves from the less crowded rooms to the more crowded ones the cost of housing deases to reach 100 Dirhams or less for the migrants living in extremely crowded rooms of 12 to 13 persons.

TABLE 6.4(b)

**THE DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS BY HOUSING EXPENSES
BY NUMBER OF PERSONS PER ROOM (%)**

HOUSING EXPENSES PER MONTH (IN DIRHAMS)	NUMBER OF PERSONS PER ROOM					
	2-3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10-11	11-12
100 OR LESS	—	0.7	2.9	3.7	27.4	84.1
101 TO 150	—	4.3	6.3	8.9	45.5	15.9
151 TO 200	6.7	7.1	8.4	69.4	19.9	—
201 TO 250	—	14.2	68.9	14.0	7.1	—
251 TO 300	40.0	70.2	13.4	4.1	—	—
OVER 300	53.3	3.5	—	—	—	—
TOTAL* %	100	100	100	100	100	100
n.	30	141	238	271	266	69

* Totals may not add up to 100 because of rounding

3.2. Ways of Minimizing Food Expenditures

Food was another item consuming a large proportion of the migrants' earnings. Two kinds of arrangement were adopted by the Keralites under study to minimize the cost of food and enhance their savings. The overwhelming majority (84.7 per cent) cooked and ate their meals collectively. The migrants living in each room shared the cost of food which was cooked in turn by one of them. For these the cost of food was between 100 and 200 Dirhams per person per month, depending on the number of persons living in the same room. The rest of the migrants (about 15 per cent) ate in restaurants catering for Keralites and other Indian expatriates. Members of this group had individually made arrangements with some restaurant owned and run by Keralites. According to such arrangements, a restaurant would provide two meals (lunch and dinner) every day for a fixed and agreed sum of money, to be paid at the end of each month by those who took the service. The cost of food for this group ranged between 200 and 300 Dirhams per month depending on the kind and amount of food served and the quality of the restaurant. Migrants in this group for one reason or another preferred to have their meals at a restaurant rather than taking the trouble of cooking by themselves. Some of them did not have the time to cook on their own, either because their place of work was very far from their residence or because they were working on shifts. Others were completely vegetarian Hindus living individually with two or three Muslim room-mates, and yet others just

liked to eat in restaurants as they could chose from a long list of various dishes.

3.3. Clothing and Other Miscellaneous Expenses

The great majority of the Keralites under study spent little money on clothes. Except for the 5 per cent who spent a little over 300 Dirhams, almost all of them spent between 200 and 300 Dirhams on clothing in a year. The Muslims bought new clothes twice or three times a year, usually for the two Eids, the Muslims' main feast days⁽⁶⁾. They also bought new clothes when they went home on holiday. As a matter of fact, the migrants spent a large proportion of their savings on new clothes for their families and relatives when they visited Kerala.

The cost of transportation was also relatively small. The vast majority of the migrants used public transport which is reasonably cheap. Where several of them worked at the same place or had places of work that were close to each other, they often filled a taxi and shared the cost, which was also not very large. Almost 92 per cent (934 persons) spent between 100 and 150 Dirhams per month for transportation and other miscellaneous expenditures. Because their place of work was within walking or cycling distance, the other eight per cent of the migrants spent a smaller amount of less than 100 Dirhams, mainly as pocket-money.

Although these Keralites did whatever they could to minimize their expenditure, some of them had to spend all

their meagre income. As Table 6.5 shows almost 13 per cent of the Keralites under study spent more than three quarters of their earnings. Of these, 98 persons (forming almost 10 per cent of the 1015 migrants) consumed all of their monthly income. These were Keralites who were casually engaged in miscellaneous menial jobs. A further 19 per cent of the study group spent between a little more than half and three quarters of their monthly income. The majority (more than 60 per cent) spent 50 per cent or less and among these nearly one fourth of the total consumed 25 per cent or less of their earnings. A relatively large proportion (7.5 per cent) spent more than they earned. These were migrants who at the time of the study did not have jobs and were living on loans from relatives and friends or on money saved from previous jobs.

TABLE 6.5
MIGRANTS BY EXPENDITURE AS PERCENTAGE OF INCOME

MONTHLY EXPENDITURE AS % OF INCOME	NUMBERS	%
25 OR LESS	253	24.9
26 TO 50	360	35.5
51 TO 75	196	19.3
76 TO 100	130	12.8
over 100	76	7.5
TOTAL	1015	100

4. Remittances and Savings

One important reason the Keralites had for migrating to the U.A.E. was the possibility of saving and remitting a large proportion of their earnings back home to their families. Families were expected to use part of the remitted money for their day to day expenses and save the rest to be used to buy a plot of cultivable land, to build a house, to educate children or younger brothers, to give in marriage daughters or sisters, or to start some sort of business once the migrants returned to Kerala.

Calculating the savings and remittances of the Keralites under investigation was rather difficult task. A relatively large proportion (little more than 17 per cent) were reluctant to give information about the amounts saved or remitted, the persons to whom remittances were made and the frequency of such remittances. Moreover, the amounts saved or remitted were not constant. They varied according to their monthly earnings which in turn varied from one job to another. For example, Imtiyaz, who was mentioned earlier in this chapter saved between 600 and 1,100 Dirhams each month during his first job, but this lasted for six months only, after which he remained without job for six months. The greater part of these savings were transferred to Kerala and the rest were consumed by him during his six months unemployment. In his second job, which lasted for seven months, Imtiyaz saved a much smaller amount of 300 to 500

Dirhams per month, but since July 1981 he had been working continuously and had been saving 1,500 Dirhams every month.

Another set of problems comes from the difficulty in separating savings from remittances. In many cases migrants remit almost all of what remains from their monthly earnings to their families. How much they save of such remittances is hard to say.

If, however, one rereads the information in Table 6.5 above one could grasp a general idea about how much these migrants were able to save from their monthly incomes at the time of the study. At least 841 persons or about 82 per cent of the Keralites in the community under study were able to save part of their earnings. Almost one fourth (253 persons) saved about 75 per cent or more of their monthly earnings; slightly more than 35 per cent (360 persons) saved between one half and a little less than three quarters; about 19 per cent (196 persons) put aside from one fourth to a little less than a half of their monthly earnings, and about 13 per cent (130 persons) either saved less than one fourth of their monthly income or did not save at all. These include those who at the time of the study were casually engaged in some miscellaneous jobs which earned them a small amount of money, spent immediately on food and housing. The rest of the migrants, forming 7.6 per cent (76 persons) had negative savings. These include the migrants who had never worked and therefor had been living on loans from relatives and friends

and those who, for one reason or another, had lost their jobs and had been spending from their previous savings.

Nonetheless, not all of what was set aside from the monthly earnings was actually saved. A large part of it was consumed by the migrants' households in Kerala. Moreover, some of what these migrants saved went undeservedly to their Kafeels. Those whose employers were persons other than their Kafeels had to use part of their savings to pay their Kafeels in order to have their residence visas renewed or to obtain a release from one Kafeel to another. These migrants usually paid between 2,000 and 5,000 Dirhams every two years. Therefore, to obtain more information about remittances and savings, the migrants were asked about their average annual remittances and average annual savings.

4.1. Average Annual Remittances

Some studies assert that not all of the Keralites working in the Gulf States send home all their savings in cash. Some Keralites repatriate a large proportion of their savings in the form of jewellery, consumer goods and producer goods (Nair, 1986b:103). Other studies distinguish between Keralites working in "high-level jobs" and those in "mid-level" and "low-level" jobs:

For employees in high level jobs drawing salaries above a minimum level, the urge to transfer all their savings home may be much less pronounced because such workers are often accompanied abroad by their families. Besides, their chances of continuing to work in the Gulf countries are much less uncertain. Furthermore,

when their employment in the Gulf region ends, they may migrate to other countries - say, in the West - where they may hope to secure jobs on the strength of their special qualifications, skills, and experience. Such migrants, therefore, remit - if they remit at all - only a small fraction of their savings to maintain their dependants still in India, or they send gifts to friends and relatives. The rest of the savings is usually deposited in Western banks.

Mid-level employees and skilled and unskilled workers save the maximum out of their earnings and transfer their savings home by way of bank remittances or money orders or in the form of cash, jewellery, and consumer durables during their home visit. In other words, there probably is not much difference between actual and potential remittances for this category of workers (Nair, 1986b:89-90).

The findings in this study seem to support the above view. As noticed earlier, almost all of the migrants under study were engaged in semi-skilled or unskilled jobs and (except for a small proportion who kept some of their savings with them to be used in case of emergency) all of the migrants who had not been consuming their entire earnings in the host country had been transferring their entire savings back home.

As the data in Table 6.6(a) show, about 60 per cent of the Keralites remitted 10,000 Dirhams or less per year and about 12 per cent only transferred more than 10,000 Dirhams per year. Eleven per cent of the migrants reported no remittance made. These were either newcomers who were not employed, or casually engaged in miscellaneous menial jobs which provided them with small, irregular earnings.

These findings provide some support for the findings of other studies on returned migrants in Kerala. According to one study conducted in Kerala using a sample of 433 Gulf returnees found that the average annual remittances for about 95 per cent of the sample was 40,000 Indian Rupees or less; an amount more or less equivalent to 6,000 Dirhams. and about 5 per cent only remitted home more than 40,000 Rupees (Government of Kerala, 1987:35).

TABLE 6.6(a)
REPORTED AVERAGE ANNUAL REMITTANCES

AVERAGE ANNUAL REMITTANCES (in Dirhams)	NUMBERS	%
NO RESPONSE	176	17.1
NO REMITTANCES	113	11.0
5,000 OR LESS	343	33.4
5,100 TO 10,000	269	26.2
10,100 TO 15,000	102	9.9
MORE THAN 15,000	24	2.3
TOTAL*	1027	100

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

4.2. Frequency of Remittances

As Table 6.6(b) shows, the majority of the 738 migrants answering the question (about 59 per cent) reported that they sent home what was left from their earnings at regular intervals (monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly). About 30 per

cent transferred their savings on a monthly basis, 16.4 per cent at bi-monthly intervals and 12.5 per cent on a quarterly basis. The rest of the migrants, about 41 per cent, reported that they sent their savings at irregular intervals.

TABLE 6.6(b)
REPORTED FREQUENCY OF REMITTANCES

FREQUENCY OF REMITTANCES	NUMBERS	%
EVERY MONTH	220	29.8
EVERY 2 MONTHS	121	16.4
EVERY 3 MONTHS	92	12.5
AT IRREGULAR INTERVALS	305	41.3
TOTAL	738	100

The migrants who were working in the government sector and the self employed were more likely to remit their savings on a regular basis than those working in the private sector. As Table 6.6(c) shows, the majority (about 63 per cent) of the private sector employees and all of the 40 persons who were irregularly employed transferred their savings to Kerala at irregular intervals. On the other hand, all of those employed in the government sector and almost 90 per cent of the self employed sent their savings home on a regular basis; usually every month.

TABLE 6.6(c)

MIGRANTS BY FREQUENCY OF REMITTANCES
BY EMPLOYMENT SECTOR (%)

FREQUENCY OF REMITTANCES	EMPLOYMENT SECTOR				TOTAL
	GOVERN- MENT SECTOR	PRIVATE SECTOR	SELF- EMPLOYED	IRREGULARLY EMPLOYED	
EVERY MONTH	53.0	17.2	51.7	—	29.8
EVERY 2 MONTHS	28.3	10.3	24.1	—	16.4
EVERY 3 MONTHS	18.7	9.8	13.8	—	12.5
AT IRREGULAR INTERVALS		62.7	10.3	100	41.3
TOTAL* %	100	100	100	100	100
n.	251	418	29	40	738

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

It seems that because the government employees received their wages and salaries regularly every month they were able to remit what was left of it regularly. This is probably another reason motivating the Keralites to seek jobs in the government. The self employed group, too, seems to have a more or less regular income. A different pattern was observed for the private sector employees. Little more than one third only of them sent their savings home on a regular basis. This was quite understandable, since a large number of them (particularly those working in construction companies) did not receive their wages and salaries regularly (see Chapter 5).

4.3. Methods of Remittances

Studies of returned migrant in Kerala showed that savings were transferred to Kerala through various legal as well as illegal channels (Nair, 1986a:106-8). The legal channels include bank drafts, cheques and mail transfer. Transfer of savings by illegal means includes smuggling gold, expensive wristwatches, video recorders and video cameras, textiles and by smuggling foreign currency (Nair, 1986b:89-90). Some of the findings in this research seem to support these studies.

TABLE 6.7
MIGRANTS BY METHODS OF REMITTANCES

METHODS OF REMITTANCES	NUMBERS	%
BANK DRAFT	711	96.3
BANK TRANSFER	642	87.0
NAIL TRANSFER	108	14.6
RELATIVE GOING HOME	339	45.9
FRIEND GOING HOME	33	4.5
OTHERS	52	7.0

Several methods were used by the Keralites to transfer their savings back home. Although a migrant may have used more than one method at one time or another, the most popular means used by a large proportion of the migrants who answered the question were bank draft and bank transfer. As Table 6.7 shows, these methods were used by more than 96 per

cent and 87 per cent respectively. Other methods of remitting money, such as sending cash with a friend or relative going home and mail transfer, were also in use by some of the migrants, but these methods were not as popular as the bank draft and bank transfer.

Information obtained from the in-depth study revealed some other means by which remittances were made. Quite a few of my informants took a large proportion of their savings in foreign currency with them when they visited Kerala and exchanged it on the black market for a higher rate than the official one. Another way of transferring money to Kerala was to deposit the amount with one of the small exchange firms in the U.A.E. (often run by Keralites and other Indians) and their agents would pay the beneficiary in India more than its official equivalent in Indian Rupees. The transaction made in this way is known as "Hawala" or "Hundi". Migrants who utilized this method often found there were long delays before the money was delivered to their families and sometimes, because of cheating or collapse of some of these exchange firms, many migrants lost a large part of their savings. Some of them whispered that they often smuggled part of their savings to Kerala in the form of gold "biscuits" (bars). Although one only of my informants reported to have lost a large sum (4,000 Dirhams) of his hard-earned savings by using such illegal methods, I was told of many such incidents had happened to a relative or a friend of my informants.

Nonetheless, the dangers involved in using the illegal methods on the one hand and the steps which have been taken by the Indian Government to allow the rupee to float, depreciating its exchange value on the other hand, have resulted in more frequent use of the legal channels.

TABLE 6.8

MIGRANTS BY RECIPIENTS OF REMITTANCES

RECIPIENT OF REMITTANCES	NUMBERS	%
PARENTS	401	54.3
SPOUSE	104	14.1
PARENTS AND SPOUSE	161	21.8
OTHER RELATIVES	23	3.1
DIRECT TRANSFER TO THEIR BANK ACCOUNT	49	6.6
TOTAL	738	100*

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

4.4. Recipients of Remittances

The majority of the migrants who answered the question concerning the recipient of remittances reported that they sent their savings to their parents. As Table 6.8 shows, these accounted for more than 54 per cent. Slightly less than one 22 per cent remitted part of their savings to their parents and part to their spouses. Those who reported that the remittances were made to their spouses formed little

more than 14 per cent only. Others, accounting for about 3 per cent, claimed that other relatives (mainly an elder brother) were the recipients of the remittances; and yet other migrants, forming 6.6 per cent transferred their savings directly to their bank account in Kerala. These were migrants with a relatively large income who had opened what are known as "Non-Resident External Accounts" in Kerala.

4.5. Average Annual Savings

As Table 6.9 shows, not all of the migrants under investigation were able to save any amount of money. Almost 16 per cent (163 persons) reported that they had not made any savings and 4.4 per cent (45 persons) claimed that they had been living on loans and were therefore considered as having made negative savings. Those who reported that they

TABLE 6.9
REPORTED AVERAGE ANNUAL SAVINGS

AVERAGE ANNUAL SAVINGS (in Dirhams)	NUMBERS	%
NO RESPONSE	176	17.1
NEGATIVE SAVINGS	45	4.4
NO SAVINGS	163	15.9
5,000 OR LESS	324	31.5
5,100 TO 10,000	226	22.0
10,100 TO 15,000	84	8.2
MORE THAN 15,000	9	0.9
TOTAL	1027	100

had been making an average annual savings of 5,000 Dirhams or less formed little more than 31 per cent of the study group, those who had been saving between 5,100 and 10,000 Dirhams formed 22 per cent and those who reported to have been saving more than 10,000 Dirhams formed little more than 9 per cent. A very small proportion (less than one per cent) had been saving an annual sum of more than 15,000 Dirhams

5. Summary

This chapter has attempted to give as detailed an account as possible of the economic position of the unskilled and semi-skilled Keralites working in Abu Dhabi. The discussion has shown that although by no means all of them were employed all the time, the vast majority of these Keralites were making a net economic gain. The great majority (about 82 per cent) of the migrants under investigation were regularly employed. However, the vast majority (87.4 per cent of them) had a monthly income of 2,000 Dirhams or less, about 75 per cent had a monthly income of 1,500 Dirhams or less and a little less than half of them earned 1,000 Dirhams or less. Although the migrants desired to increase their earnings by taking part time jobs beside their principal one, only a few of those working in the government sector were able to find such jobs.

There seems to be a positive relationship between the monthly earnings of these migrants and the skill level of their jobs. Thus all of the Keralites employed in skilled occupation had a monthly income of more than 2,000 Dirhams.

The proportions for those in semi-skilled and unskilled occupations were 60 per cent and 3 per cent respectively. The monthly income of the migrants varied according to the sector in which they were employed. While the self-employed Keralites had a higher income than those in both the government and the private sectors, the government sector employees received from 50 to 100 per cent more than their counterparts in the private sector.

The Keralites under investigation did their utmost to minimize their expenditure in the host country. Almost one fourth of them spent as little as 25 per cent or less of their monthly income, a little over one third managed to keep their expenditure to 50 per cent of their income and a smaller proportion, less than 13 per cent, had to spend between 75 and 100 per cent of their meagre income.

The great majority (a little less than 88 per cent) of the 851 Keralites who answered the question regarding remittances, reported that they had been able to remit part of their earnings back to Kerala. Of these, about 87 per cent reported average annual remittances of 10,000 Dirhams or less. Unlike the migrants who were working in the private sector, the great majority of the government employees and of the self-employed were more likely to remit part of their income back to Kerala at regular intervals (monthly, bi-monthly and quarterly).

Various methods, both legal and illegal, were used by the migrants to transfer their savings back home.

Nonetheless, because of the dangers involved in using illegal methods, the migrants increasingly used the legal means such as bank draft and bank transfer. Other methods, such as sending money with relatives or friends going home, or mail transfer, were less popular. The largest proportion of the migrants sent their remittances to their parents and a very small proportion, less than 7 per cent, transferred their savings directly to their "Non-Resident Accounts" in Kerala.

It is observed, however, that not all of what was remitted by the migrants was actually saved. Part of what had been remitted was consumed by the migrants' families. Nonetheless, the great majority of the migrants who were able to remit part of their earnings to Kerala reported that they had made some savings. More than 54 per cent of them, however, had made average annual savings of 10,000 Dirhams or less.

It was not, however, because the contracts of these migrants entitled them to free accommodation, free or highly subsidized food and transportation, free medical facilities and other privileges that they were able to save and remit a large proportion of their income back to Kerala as some studies have argued (Nair, 1986B and Government of Kerala, 1987) . Rather, the ability of these Keralites to send home a large proportion of their income was mainly a consequence of the way of life (living in over-crowded housing conditions, cooking and eating collectively and avoiding

unnecessary expenditure) adopted by them to circumvent the high cost of living in Abu Dhabi and to maximize their savings. Some of these Keralites also resorted to illegal means of remitting their savings, in an attempt to increase their value.

An important point to emerge from this chapter has been the link between savings and remittances, and living conditions, in that many migrants either chose or were forced to accept poor and overcrowded accommodation in order to save from a low income. This is not to say, however, that all migrants were in the same position, or no other factors were involved. We shall therefore examine migrants' living conditions in some detail in the following chapter.

NOTES

1. In May 1983 the Federal National Council approved a law abolishing free medical services for non-citizens. Now migrants have to pay for medical services every time they needed them.
2. Less than 272 Dollars.
3. Less than 133 Dollars.
4. "Hammali" is the local Arabic word for porter.
5. A "Man" is a local weight equal to four kilograms.
6. These two Eids are Eidul Fitr which is celebrated on the first day of Shawwal; the tenth month of the Islamic calendar and Eidul Adha which is commemorated on the tenth day of Thul Hijjah; the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar.

CHAPTER SEVEN

LIVING CONDITIONS OF MIGRANTS

1. Introduction

This chapter looks more closely at the living conditions of the unskilled and semi-skilled Keralite immigrants in Abu Dhabi. It examines housing conditions in the U.A.E. in general and in Abu Dhabi in particular, and considers how these conditions have affected the housing of the Keralite immigrants.

Except for the meagre information published by the Government of the U.A.E. in the Annual Statistical Abstract there is no officially published information, statistical or otherwise, on the issue of housing in the U.A.E., nor is there any official information in relation to the accommodation problems faced by immigrants, let alone particular immigrant sub-groups. Thus, the discussion in this chapter is based on the researcher's own observations and the information obtained from the Keralites under investigation.

2. Housing Conditions in the U.A.E.

For the last fifteen years or so, housing has been a major problem, not only for immigrants but also for many low income U.A.E. citizens as well. The huge waves of immigrant labour which have been entering the country since the

massive increase in the oil prices in the early seventies created an instantaneous need for housing. Although the effort of the government to meet the demand for housing was remarkable, it only lessened the problem by providing a large proportion of the U.A.E. citizens with adequate housing. The immigrants, for their part, were left entirely at the mercy of the private housing market.

Information regarding the numbers of each type of housing unit in the U.A.E. is very limited and quite possibly unreliable. One has to use such data rather carefully. The number of housing units in the U.A.E. reportedly increased from 94,400 unit in 1975 to 275,000 in 1985, recording an average increase of 24 percent per year (Ministry of Planning, 1987:134). This huge increase was probably sufficient to meet the demand for housing of the larger part of the "eligible" population; that is, citizens and high-level government employees. It is worth noticing that the increases in the average and above average standard housing units were greater than the increase in the low-cost housing dwellings. Thus, while the average annual increase in the former was 22.4 and 17.6 per cent respectively it was only 6.5 per cent in the latter (Ministry of Planning, 1987:135). The problem of housing continued to be acute, not only for the unskilled and semi-skilled, and even the skilled working in the private sector or self employed, but also for the unskilled and semi-skilled in the government sector. Since the law in the U.A.E. does not allow non-citizens to own any type of real estate⁽¹⁾, immigrants have

no other alternative but to rent from and be exploited by the national landlords who, because of the high demand for housing, were able to charge rapidly increasing rents. The average annual rent of a two bedroom apartment, for instance, rose from about 13,000 Derhams in 1978 to about 19,000 in 1980 and 29,000 in 1982 (Ministry of Planning, 1987:137). By 1988 the annual rent of an average two bedroom apartment amounted to about 35,000 Derhams.

In 1985 there were about 273,000 housing units of various types in the U.A.E. (Ministry of Planning, 1988:196-97) housing an estimated population of about 1,961,000 persons, 85 per cent of whom were immigrants (Serageldin, et al., 1981:51-141) This means that there was a housing unit for every 7.2 persons. If one allows for vacant units and units used for business purposes, this figure increases to 8.5 persons per housing unit. The types of housing unit varied considerably. They ranged from very high standard villas to unhealthy shacks and sheds, as the following table shows.

Housing units in the U.A.E. may be classified into two main categories. The first includes the conventional dwellings such as flats, villas, traditional Arab houses⁽²⁾, low-cost houses built by the government for low income citizens, and annexes. The second category includes the marginal buildings such as sheds, shanties, caravans, shacks, tents and the like.

As Table 7.1 shows, of the conventional dwellings, flats are the most popular type of housing in the U.A.E. forming slightly more than 37 per cent of the total housing units. This type of housing is used as a residence as well as for business purposes. Information available for the year 1980 suggests that about 57 per cent (57,728 flats) of them were used as a residence (Ministry of Planning, 1988:190), mainly by immigrant families. Moreover, because these housing units are relatively expensive, (in 1983 for example, the average annual rent for these units was 29,000 Derhams) almost 4 per cent of the flats were occupied by two families or more (Ministry of Planning, 1988:137 and 190).

TABLE 7.1
DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING UNITS
IN THE U.A.E. BY TYPE

TYPE OF HOUSING UNITS	NUMBERS	%
1.CONVENTIONAL		
FLAT	101844	37.3
VILLA	26089	9.6
ARAB HOUSE	52576	19.3
LOW-COAST HOUSE	39093	14.3
ANNEXE	14174	5.2
2.MARGINAL		
SHED	3836	1.4
SHANTIES	10381	3.8
CARAVAN	3083	1.1
SHACK	4761	1.7
OTHERS	16954	6.2
TOTAL	272791	100*

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding
Source: Adapted from The Annual Statistical Abstract,
op cit., pp. 196-97, Table 128.

Next in terms of popularity are the traditional Arab houses and low cost houses, forming a little more than 19 per cent and slightly over 14 per cent respectively. These types of houses are mainly owned and occupied by nationals. In recent years, however, a large number of citizens living in these houses have abandoned them for better housing conditions in the newly established neighbourhoods. These deserted houses have become particularly popular among the low income single migrants for collective living. The annual rent for this type of housing depends on the number of rooms. At the time of the study it ranged from 20,000 to 80.000 Derhams.

Villas constitute a little less than one third of the total housing units. These are the most expensive housing units; annual rents range from 50,000 to as high as 300,000 Derhams. Villas are mainly inhabited by upper-class nationals as well as expatriate merchants and businessmen, foreign diplomats, senior government employees and oil company staff.

When the demand for housing increased rapidly as immigrant labour began to rush into the country, a new type of housing emerged in response to this demand. These are the annexes which by 1985 formed more than 5 per cent of total housing units. Annexes consist of one room, with a small bathroom and either a tiny kitchen attached or no kitchen at all, so that the tenants have to cook in one corner of the same room in which they are living and sleeping. There are

no separate living rooms in this form of accommodation. For immigrant families annexes are the cheapest housing units among these counted as conventional dwellings. In 1980 there were about 9,000 families living in annexes (Ministry of Planning, 1988:190).

In addition, however, there are sheds, shanties caravans, shacks and other type of marginal housing units that are not specified by the Annual Statistical Abstract of the U.A.E. such as tents and wooden huts. In 1985 these marginal dwellings together formed more than 14 per cent of all the housing units in the U.A.E. (see Table 7.1 above). Sheds, shanties, cottages and tents are of temporary nature usually occupied by national bedouin awaiting their turn to be transferred to the low-cost housing which the government has been building for them and other low-income nationals.

The shacks are situated around the industrial areas outside the cities forming small shanty towns. These shacks are made of wood, asbestos and some of the roofs are poorly covered with asphalt. These "shanty towns" are largely inhabited by single Asian immigrants (though quite few families may also be found) living in highly overcrowded and unhealthy conditions. It is very difficult to know the numbers of people living in these shanty towns but it is no secret that the population density is very high. One local newspaper estimated that nearly 40,000 Asian immigrants, mainly from Pakistan, were living in one of these shanty towns outside Al Ain city in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi (Arab

Planning Institute, 1982:62-6). This shanty town is locally known as Madeenat El-Pathan; the Town of the Pathans, because almost all of the inhabitants are single Pathans from Pakistan. It is common knowledge that a large proportion of the dwellers are illegal migrants. Similar shanty towns are found in various Emirates in the U.A.E. and in some other Gulf countries (Al-Najjar, 1983:210-2238).

Another type of marginal dwellings for single immigrant workers are the caravans and wooden huts that are found in "enclaves" near construction sites. These dwellings are of temporary nature, since at the completion of the construction they are demolished and the workers presumably leave the host country. The inhabitants of these dwellings are mainly immigrants from the Far East and South East Asia, though there are some South Asians among them.

3. Housing Conditions in Abu Dhabi

The problem of housing is even more acute in the particular case of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Several factors have interacted to aggravate the housing problem in this Emirate. First, urbanization and modernization started in the other Emirates (particularly the Emirates of Dubai and Sharjah) long before the discovery of oil. For these Emirates, the availability of oil revenues has only accelerated such development. In the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, however, the process of modernization and urbanization started only after the beginning of oil production in 1962 (Anthony, 1975:83).

Second, the astronomical speed with which the processes of modernization and urbanization took place in all of the Emirates including Abu Dhabi resulted in massive numbers of immigrants filling a wide variety of needs in their economies, creating a huge demand for housing. Encouraged by the ever increasing demand, the wealthy elite in each Emirate (especially in the three oil-producing Emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah) invested heavily in the private housing market. However, little consideration was taken of the nature and the size of the existing or expected population in each place or of the specific demand for different types of housing unit. Thus, the resulting supply of housing units of different qualities was not proportional to the size of each occupational group. Nor was it proportional to the population size in each Emirate. It is noticed that while there has been a shortage of housing in Abu Dhabi and to a lesser extent in Dubai, there has been a surplus in the other Emirates (Ministry of Planning, 1987:136). The population of Abu Dhabi increased from 211,812 in 1975 to 722,143 in 1988, reporting a net increase of 341 per cent in 13 years only. This created enormous demand for the limited available housing units and put strong upward pressure on rents. However, the resulting growth in supply has been insufficient. As the data in Table 7.2 show, unlike the other six emirates, Abu Dhabi's share of the total housing units in the country in 1985 was disproportional to its share of the total population. While the Emirate of Ab Dhabi accounted for almost 46 per cent of

the total population of the country its share of the total housing units was less than 39 per cent. This condition resulted in more marginal housing in Abu Dhabi than in the other emirates. Thus in 1985 the marginal housing found in Abu Dhabi formed about 20 per cent of the total housing units compared to less than 9 per cent in the second largest emirate of Dubai (Ministry of Planning, 1988:196-7).

TABLE 7.2
POPULATION AND HOUSING UNITS
BY EMIRATE IN 1985 (PERCENTAGE)

EMIRATE	POPULATION 15 YEARS OR OLDER	HOUSING UNITS
ABU DHABI	45.7	38.8
DUBAI	26.7	25.6
SHARJAH	14.4	18.0
AJMAN	3.0	3.9
UMM-AL-QIWAIN	1.1	1.6
RAS AL-KHAIMA	6.4	8.8
FUJEIRA	2.7	3.2
TOTAL % n.	100 744,166	100* 272,791

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding
Source: Adapted from The Annual Statistical Abstract,
op cit., Table 18 p. 45 and Table 128 pp. 196-
97.

Third, the monopolisation of political power by a small elite group in the Emirate, coupled with its complete domination of the private housing market, gave its members unrestricted power to create laws that protect their

interests. The landlord, for example, has the absolute right to increase the rent as much as he or she wants and to force the tenants to vacate their houses if they do not accept the new rental arrangement. Up to this date there are no laws governing the relationship between the landlords and the tenants. The researcher came across many cases where immigrants were forced to vacate their accommodation because they were unable to pay the new rent or because a landlord wanted to demolish his old building, reconstruct it and re-let it at a higher rent. The high costs of rent, coupled with the fact that no protection is provided to tenants, resulted in the accommodation insecurity of immigrants, particularly the unskilled and semi-skilled.

Mukhtar, whom we first met in Chapter 5 as a shop assistant in Habeeb's fruit and vegetable shop, commented as follows:

When I came to Abu Dhabi in 1974 I lived with other 25 Keralites in a four room house in the powerhouse area⁽³⁾. It was a traditional Arab house. We used to pay 2,000 Derhams a month. Two years later the owner asked for 3,000 Derhams. We decided to pay since there was no other place to go and we had five more people living with us. It was very difficult in those days to find a house but six months later the landlord decided to build two additional rooms in the house and raise the rent to 5,000 Derhams. Again, after thinking it over, we decided to stay in the house and have more people to live with us. After the completion of the construction we had 17 more persons in the house.

The landlord did not increase the rent until three years later when he paid us a visit and informed us that the rent of the house was going to be 10,000 starting the following

month. We were really shocked because the previous times he used to raise the rent one thousand or two but this time he just doubled the rent. We tried to reason with him that this amount was beyond our ability and that we have families to take care of back home. We even offered him 7,000 Derhams, but he was not ready to compromise and said that if we could not afford the rent we should find ourselves another place. He left angrily saying that he would come back in a few days to hear our decision.

We discussed the matter with each other. Many of us could not pay their share in the rent and some of us were jobless at the time, it was just not possible for us to continue in that house. Even if we were able to pay the 10,000 Derhams there was no guarantee that he would not increase the rent two or three months later. So we decided to leave the house... I and four of my room-mates came to live in this house with some of our friends and the others did the same thing.

Statements such as these were not uncommon in the immigrant community. Many immigrants reported that they had experienced similar situations. They were forced either to pay higher rents or to evacuate the premises, sometimes with the help of the police! Another Keralite, Muzaffer, described his experience:

Before I came to live in this house I was living with four other Keralites in an annexe to an Arab house. There was only one room and a small bathroom in that annexe. We used to cook our food inside the room. Originally, this annexe was the residence of one of my four room-mates, Younus, who used to live in it with his wife and two little daughters. He lived in this annexe for almost three years. But his landlord raised the rent so he decided to send his family back to Kerala and share the annexe with some other Keralites. A friend of mine and I were looking for accommodation because the accommodation provided by our employer was not good. There were 15 of us: my friend and I, five from Tamilnadu, three Iranians, two from

Egypt and three Pakistanis. All of us lived in a 30 sq. metre room provided by our employer close to where we worked.... When we heard that Younus was looking for room-mates we talked to him and moved to live and share the rent with him. Two months later a relative of my friend and Younus' younger brother arrived from Kerala and shared the annexe with us. When the landlord noticed that now there were five people living in the annexe he demanded that we pay two thousand Derhams a month. He said, "If you don't like it find yourselves another place". We refused to pay and told him that we would stay and pay the old rent only. He left and came back after two hours with two policemen who took us all to the police station, where we were told that we either had to pay the new rent, since we did not have a contract specifying the leasing period, or evacuate the premises by the end of the month. So, we signed a commitment to vacate the annexe on the due date.

Housing has been a problem, not only for the unskilled and semi-skilled immigrants but also for the skilled and the professionals working in the private sector. The problem of housing became so serious that it was a daily issue in the local newspapers, and in 1987 The Ministry of Planning demanded, among other things, that laws controlling the relationship between landlords and tenants must be issued (Ministry of Planning, 1987:139).

Last but not least is the way the involvement of the Government in the private housing market resulted in increased rents. One indirect way in which oil wealth was distributed among some sections of the indigenous population in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi took the form of the government renting buildings for its ministries and apartments for its administrators and high level employees from indigenous landlords (mainly members of a small local bourgeoisie who

own the larger part of the commercial real estate in the Emirate). Attracted by the high and steady rents, even small landlords preferred to rent their buildings and villas to the government and big oil companies rather than to individuals. The years 1980 - 1983 witnessed the largest increase in rents as the Federal Government decided to provide housing for all of its foreign employees (excepting those in the lower grades) instead of paying them housing allowances. Because the great majority of the Federal Government's employees were located in the capital city of Abu Dhabi, the rent increases were much higher there than anywhere else in the U.A.E.. As Table 7.3 shows, the average annual rent of an average apartment was 16,000 Derhams in 1978, rose to 31,000 in 1980 and reached 45,000 in 1983. This represented

TABLE 7.3

**AVERAGE ANNUAL RENT OF AN AVERAGE HOUSING UNIT
BY EMIRATE FOR THE YEARS 1978 -1983**

EMIRATE	AVERAGE ANNUAL RENT (in Derhams)			AVERAGE ANNUAL INCREASE (%)
	1978	1980	1983	
ABU DHABI	16,000	31,000	45,000	36.3
DUBAI	10,000	9,000	20,000	20.0
SHARJAH	11,500	9,500	15,000	6.1
AJMAN	10,500	8,000	12,000	2.3
UMM-AL-QIWAIN	10,000	6,000	7,000	(6.0)
RAS AL-KHAIMA	10,000	7,000	10,000	0
FUJEIRA	10,500	12,000	12,000	2.3

Source: adapted from Ministry of Planning, Economic and Social Development in the U.A.E., op. cit., Table 60, p. 137.

an average annual increase of 36.3 per cent. This sharp increase in the rents resulted in a large number of low-income migrant families abandoning their apartments to find cheaper housing units or share an apartment with another family. It is quite common to find two, or even three, families sharing one apartment in Abu Dhabi.

The housing condition in the U.A.E. in general and in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in particular is more or less similar to that found in other Arab states of the Gulf (Al-Najjar, 1983:207-243 and Sen, 1986:321-332). According to Al-Najjar, housing has been a major problem in Kuwait since the beginning of the seventies, not only for the immigrants but for a large proportion of Kuwaiti citizens as well. housing situation in Kuwait is characterized by a general shortage of housing units, the existence of many "Ashish" (slum areas) and the huge increase in the average house rent (Al-Najjar, 1983:207-8).

4. Housing for Single Keralite Immigrants

The Government decision to provide housing for its employees has solved the housing problem of a large proportion of the immigrants employed in the white-collar jobs but it has made worse the problem of housing for the great majority of the migrants (particularly the single unskilled and semi-skilled employed in both the government and private sectors). The higher rents demanded by landlords in response to the government decision pushed many of them to distant districts. A substantial number, however, have

managed through the help of a relative, a friend or a work-mate, to find themselves some shelters in the slum areas of the city such as the areas of Madinat Zayed, Da'erat Elmeyah and the Powerhouse. In these areas, the single migrants (who are mainly Asians from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) live in extremely overcrowded housing conditions. In many cases 60 or 70 immigrants live in one traditional Arab house with an average of 8 to 12 persons in a room.

At the time of the study, the houses of Asian immigrants in these areas were not uniformly distributed. There was a tendency for each group of immigrants to settle in a specific location within these areas, forming clusters of houses occupied exclusively by those from the same area or state, or speaking the same language in their home country. Thus, one found a few houses inhabited by Keralites, then a cluster of houses occupied by Tamils and yet a third cluster of dwellings accommodating some Pathans, and so on.

Religious affiliation did not seem to affect the housing patterns of the Keralites under investigation. Thus, it was not unusual to find Hindu, Christian and Muslim Keralites living together in the same house, or even the same room⁽⁴⁾. But it was unlikely, for example, to come across immigrants from north India living with immigrants from south India, even if they were of the same religion. In other words, the linguistic-regional factor seemed to be the most important element shaping the distribution of the

Indian immigrants' houses. The following paragraphs will examine the specific housing conditions and accommodation arrangements of the Keralites under study.

Keralite immigrants engaged in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs lived in clusters of houses in the few slum quarters of the city of Abu Dhabi. It was not possible for the researcher to survey each of these areas separately. I shall, therefore, deal only with the area of Madinat Zayed where I conducted most of my field work and where a sizeable number of single Keralites live. Comparable settlement do exist in other areas in Abu Dhabi, such as the areas of Powerhouse and Da'erat Elmeyah as well as in the industrial area of Mussafah. From several brief visits to these areas, I have no reason to believe that there are substantial differences between the Keralites' settlement in Madinat Zayed and their settlements in the other areas, or that the conclusions drawn from the study do not apply to the other areas.

There were at least 1,500 Keralites living in 50 old traditional Arab houses in the area known as Madinat Zayed, which is situated on the fringe of Abu Dhabi's city center. The houses were dispersed throughout the area in clusters separated by clusters of houses occupied by migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and other linguistic-regional divisions of India. These houses were originally built in the late sixties by the Government of Abu Dhabi to



Plate 2: The old houses in Madinat Zayed encircled by multi-story buildings.



Plate 3: The old houses were rented to the single immigrants who found in these houses suitable facilities for collective accomodation.

accommodate some of the local population, but within a few years the city center grew so fast and commercial building increased so rapidly that by the late seventies the area of Madinat Zayed was incorporated within the city center, encircled by multi-storey buildings (see Plates 2 and 3). The government of Abu Dhabi helped the local families living in this and other similar areas to move to better residential areas. The old houses were then rented to the single immigrants who found in these houses suitable facilities for collective accommodation.

Originally, these houses had only three or four rooms facing a large courtyard, but the owners have since built several more rooms and bathrooms. Some of the houses were divided into four units and rented separately. All of the rooms were used as bedrooms; there were no sitting rooms or living rooms in these houses. Hence the tenants of each room were strictly confined to their rooms and a very small area in front of their rooms. In most of the houses (32 houses) there was a small kitchen and a bathroom for each room. Some houses had a kitchen and a bathroom for every two rooms. In some of these houses, additional bathrooms and kitchens had been built by the tenants themselves.

Almost all of the houses were in a dilapidated condition and needed immediate maintenance (see Plates 4, 5, 6 and 7). In order to maximize their profit, the owners had not bothered to maintain the houses in good condition. All the houses were rented unfurnished and the tenants had to



Plate 4: Almost all of the houses where the unskilled and semi-skilled Keralites lived were in a dilapidated condition and needed immediate maintenance.



Plate 5: Another example of migrants' houses.



Plate 6: A typical house of the unskilled and semi-skilled migrants.

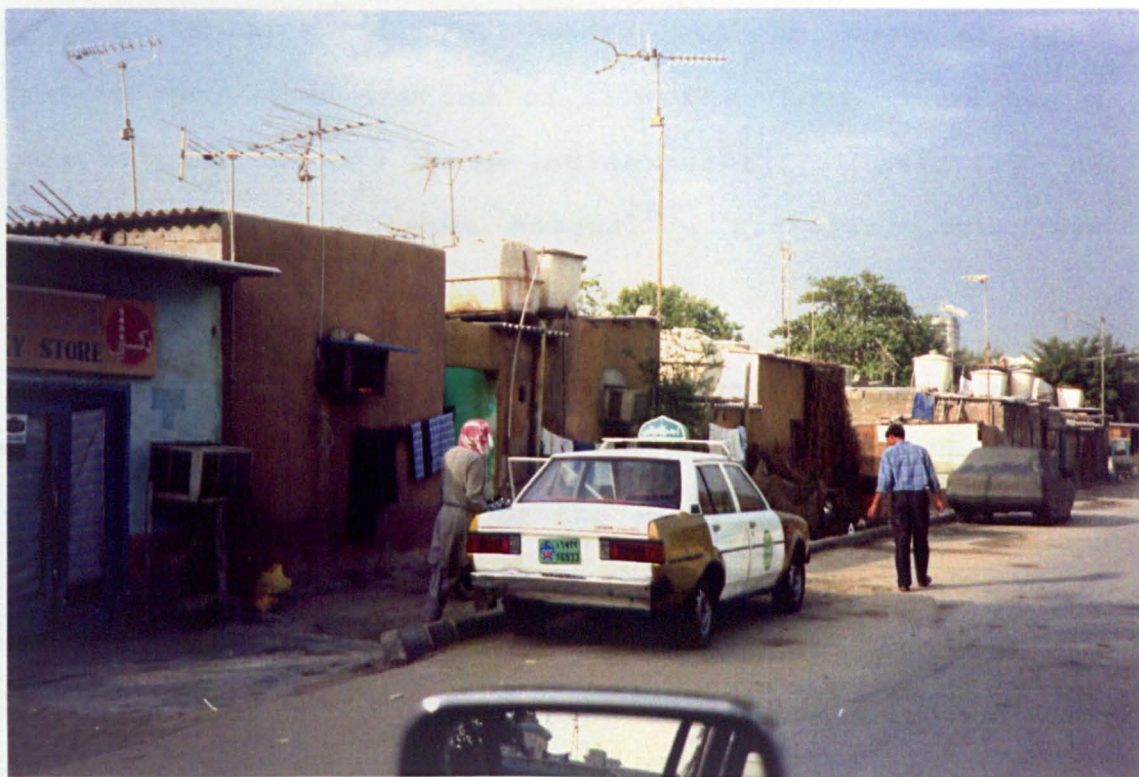


Plate 7: Another example of the housing conditions of the unskilled and semi-skilled migrants.

buy whatever furniture they needed. In most cases the tenants themselves had painted the walls inside their rooms, had done the necessary maintenance and had put some cheap linoleum on the floor.

There was not much furniture in many of the rooms. As a matter of fact, there was barely space for furniture, even for a solitary chair. All the space was occupied by the tenants' beds (most often bunk-beds). There were usually no wardrobes or cupboards, so the tenants kept all their personal belongings in suitcases under their beds (see Plates 8 and 9). Most of the room were lit with fluorescent lights and had fans hanging from the ceilings. There was an air-conditioning unit in every room. Cheap quality curtains were hung in some of the rooms. but in most of them newspapers were used instead of curtains. Most rooms had a few decorations, mainly cheap Indian paintings, paintings of the Ka'aba and the Prophet Mosque⁽⁵⁾, pictorial calendars and family photographs.

In some of the rooms (40 rooms only), there were a video cassette recorder and/or a television set. These had sometimes been freely given by the employers of the tenants who worked as domestic helpers as they decided to get rid of them for one reason or another. Otherwise, the tenants collectively had bought them very cheaply as second hand items. Invariably, however, there was more than one tape recorder and radio in the rooms. Although these were owned by individuals as means of entertainment, all of the tenants



Plate 8: All the space in a room was occupied by the tenants' beds (most often bunk-beds).



Plate 9: There were usually no wardrobes or cupboards, so the tenants kept all their personal belongings in suitcases under their beds.



Plate 10: Most of the kitchens in the migrants' houses normally furnished with a large gas cooker.



Plate 11: A typical kitchen in the houses of unskilled and semi-skilled Keralite migrants.

in the room had access to them provided that they handled them carefully and did not disturb other tenants in the house. Generally, the rooms were kept very clean, though untidy.

Most of the kitchens in the houses were normally furnished with a large gas cooker (see Plate 10 and 11) and a refrigerator, and when a kitchen was shared by the tenants of two rooms, there were two cookers and two refrigerators. In some cases, however, because the shared kitchen was small, refrigerators were kept in the rooms or in a shady place outside the kitchen. In most of the kitchen there were a table and a few shelves on which the utensils were kept, as well as one or two kitchen cupboards used for storage.

Bathrooms were usually equipped with a shower and washing basin only. The lavatories were separated so that no one would occupy both facilities at the same time. The tenants in most of the houses had put one or two washing basins outside the bathroom to be used by everybody. Although the tenants had built additional bathrooms in most of the houses, they still felt there was a shortage of these facilities.

The houses in which the Keralites under study lived were characterized by overcrowding. As Table 7.4 shows, the density in these houses varied from 10 persons to over 70 person per house. More than 70 per cent of the Keralite under study lived in houses of high density of 30 persons or more and slightly less than one third lived in houses with a

density as high as 50 people or more. Only a few of them (about 10 per cent) lived in a relatively low density houses of less than 20 persons.

TABLE 7.4
DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS AND HOUSES BY DENSITY

HOUSE DENSITY	NUMBER OF HOUSES		NUMBER OF MIGRANTS	
	n.	%	n.	%
10 TO 19 PERSONS	14	28.0	101	9.8
20 TO 29 PERSONS	13	26.0	197	19.2
30 TO 39 PERSONS	8	16.0	190	18.5
40 TO 49 PERSONS	7	14.0	203	19.8
50 TO 59 PERSONS	4	8.0	158	15.4
60 TO 69 PERSONS	3	6.0	125	12.2
70 OR MORE	1	2.0	53	5.2
TOTAL	50	100	1027	100*

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

The density in these houses, however, was a function of the number of rooms in each house, the size of the rooms and the number of migrants accommodated in each room. One of the houses, for instance, accommodated 63 migrants distributed in varying numbers among the house's nine rooms. Some of the rooms were relatively large (6 x 4 metres) and were overcrowded with up to 13 persons. Other rooms were quite small (3 x 4 metres) and sheltered two or three persons only. Another house with a relatively low density of 12 persons had two rooms only, of which one was filled with 8

persons and the other was occupied by 4 people only. Therefore, although the house density may provide a reasonable picture of the single Keralites' housing conditions, the room density is an even better indicator, as the following table indicates.

TABLE 7.5
DISTRIBUTION OF THE MIGRANTS
BY ROOM DENSITY (%)

ROOM DENSITY	NUMBERS	%
2 TO 3 PERSONS	30	2.9
4 TO 5 PERSONS	143	13.9
6 TO 7 PERSONS	240	23.4
8 TO 9 PERSONS	275	26.8
10 TO 11 PERSONS	268	26.1
12 TO 13 PERSONS	71	6.9
TOTAL %	1027	100

The vast majority of the migrants (over 83 per cent) lived in crowded rooms sheltering six persons or more, over one fourth of them lived in rooms of 8 to 9 people and almost one third lived in overcrowded rooms of 10 immigrants or more. In rooms like this the migrants slept on bunk-beds or on thin mattresses to separate their bodies from the damp floor. Less than three per cent lived in relatively less crowded rooms of 2 to 3 persons.

These findings are not dissimilar from those of studies of single immigrants in Kuwait (Al-Najjar, 1983:207-245, Sen, 1986:321-332 and Ministry of Planning, 1982:22-41). According to one official study carried out by the Kuwait Ministry of Planning almost 60 per cent of a sample of 2785 single immigrant were living in small housing units of less than 4 sq. metres. About 47 per cent of the sample were living in overcrowded rooms sheltering more than five and up to 15 persons. Moreover, the study found that in two fifths of the sample's houses there was one lavatory for 11 to 25 persons. The average number of people per kitchen was found to be 100, while many houses had no kitchen at all and the tenants had to cook inside their rooms endangering their health. Alternatively, they cooked in a wooden shelter built by the tenants themselves specially for this purpose; a situation which might result in a dangerous fire (1982:22-41).

Living in such overcrowded conditions can be seen as stemming from two factors, one economic, the other social. The economic factor is straightforward. Shortages in the supply of housing in Abu Dhabi and the high cost of housing, coupled with the immigrants' low income and their desire to save as much as possible, left them with no choice but to live with as many in one house as it would take. None of the Keralites under study liked to live in such overcrowded housing conditions. But also none of them was able to rent a room on his own. It seems that the Keralites (as well as other unskilled and semi-skilled Asian immigrants) have very

little choice of where and how they live. Hajji whom we first met in Chapter 4 as Jamal's companion in the launch adventure to Dubai commented on this issue as follows:

There is no alternative. None of us can rent a single room on his own, let alone a house, not only because we cannot afford to do so - indeed some of us can - but because we want to send some of our income back home for our families and save as much as we can. We have too many responsibilities back home. We are not going to live in this country for ever and whether we like it or not, one day we are going to leave this country and go back home

Even those whose monthly income was large enough (4,000 Derhams or more) to give them the choice of sending for their families to join them, were unable to rent an independent house or apartment on their own. Not only would this have taken a large proportion of their earnings but setting up an independent household would have militated against their motive for migration. Thus, it is not unusual to find two or even three families sharing a two or three bedroom house or apartment or, alternatively, each family renting an annexe. Even renting an annexe would mean spending one third to one half of one's income on housing (for more details on housing expenses, (see Chapter 6).

The second, social factor, is related to the way the immigrants in each house were distributed. While it was quite common to find Keralites coming from different districts in Kerala living together in the same house, their distribution among the rooms depended largely on the

specific village, the sub-district or the district from which they came. In most cases, all of the occupants in a room not only came from one village but were all related by kinship or affinity.

In one typical house, there were 52 Keralites living together in six rooms. One room was occupied by eleven persons, all of whom were Muslims from the village of Cundore in Malappuram district and seven of whom were related to each other in some way. The second room was sheltering ten Muslim Keralites from Chavakkad village in the district of Trichur. The third room was inhabited by ten Muslim immigrants. Eight of them were from Varkkalla village and four were relatives. The other two in the room were brothers from the village of Kulamuttom. Both of these villages, however, are in the sub-district of Varkkalla in Trivandrum District.

There were two groups of eight Keralites living in the fourth and the fifth rooms. The group in the fourth room were five Muslims, two Hindus and one Christian. They had come from three different villages, all of which, however, belonged to the district of Ernakulam. Those in the fifth room were seven Muslims and one Hindu. They, too, had come from four different villages but from the same district of Quilon. Two of the seven Muslims were brothers and two were brothers-in-law. The sixth room was the shelter of three Hindus and two Muslims, all of whom were from Calicut in Kozhikode District.

Almost all of the Keralites under study were distributed in more or less the same way in the rooms of each of the fifty houses. The vast majority of them were connected to each other by ties of kinship, affinity, or residence in the same village or the same sub-district in Kerala. Of the 188 rooms, only 17 rooms were found to be shared by Keralites coming from different districts. These, however, either shared a work place or had known each other for a long time. Keralites coming from the same village, more often relatives, were more likely to share the same room, followed by immigrants coming from neighbouring villages and so on.

The desire to live with relatives or fellow villagers was so strong among the Keralites that even the few (23 persons) who were provided with free accommodation by their employer chose to pay rent in addition to their free accommodation in order to spend time - if only for few days every week - with their relatives, friends and fellow villagers. Mudi, whom we first met in Chapter 5 as the domestic helper in the house of a major in the army, explained as follows:

Working in that house makes me feel like a prisoner. There is no one to talk to. The only thing I hear in that house is 'do this' and 'do that'. When I finish my work, usually at ten o'clock, I often come here instead of going to my room in that house. I spend more nights here with my friend than in my little room in the major's house. Although I come here very late, the few minutes I spend here talking to my friends before going to bed make me feel good. We talk about our problems and about what is

going on back in Kerala. It is our gathering that helps us tolerate the unpleasant living conditions in this country.

Another statement was made by Husain who was working as a pesticide labourer in the Ministry of Defence. He and three other workers were provided with a room in the army camp. Nonetheless, he commented:

I impatiently count the days to come here and be with my friends during the weekends. Although I have some friends in the camp, especially my two room-mates, Amjad from Pakistan and Nassruldeen, an Indian from Bombay, it is only here among relatives and friends from my own home village that I feel I am at home. Here one feels that he has someone to care about him. On Thursday nights we rent a Malayali video film and watch it together and on Fridays we go shopping or just walk around visiting some friends or relatives.

Sharing accommodation with other fellow villagers in addition to the lodging provided by the employer had a practical function, as well as the sentimental ones mentioned in the above statements. When a friend or a migrant came to Abu Dhabi for the first time he would always need someone to meet him at the airport and a place to stay, even if his relative or friend was away. Naser, for example, came to Abu Dhabi in 1981 using a visa bought by his brother. He was met at the airport by two of his brother's friends and room-mates who took him straight to their place, where he stayed for three days sleeping in his brother's bed. His brother was away in Jabal Eldhanah where he works. There, he lives with other workers in a room provided by his employer but at the weekends, he comes to Abu Dhabi and

spends time with his friends and fellow-villagers. Naser met his brother three days after his arrival.

Keralites, like all other immigrants from the Indian sub-continent, do not find anything wrong in sharing a bedrooms with other Keralite immigrants; there is no social stigma in the sending community or in the host society against relatives, friends and even these who are merely fellow-villagers sharing a room or even a bed. Individual privacy does not seem to be of much importance. To quote from a study of Indian immigrants to Britain:

The ethos of the Indian joint family system does not provide for privacy, except for the husband and wife. If anything, it disapproves of privacy, since 'members of a family should have nothing to hide from each other'." (Desai, 1963:30)

Because there were no living rooms in these houses, the tenants of each room were confined to a tiny area in front of their rooms. They, therefore, received their friends and guests in the same rooms in which they lived, ate, slept and in some cases cooked (see Plate 12). In the evenings when the temperature dropps and the climate became tolerable without air-conditioning, they put some chairs in the small area in front of their rooms and received their guests there. In this area they often had their dinner, ironed their clothes and sometimes played cards (see Plate 13).

There is no question that such overcrowded living conditions must affect the health of the immigrants. Not surprisingly, various types of ailment such as influenza,



Plate 12: Because there were no living rooms in these houses, the residents of each room received their friends and guests in the same room in which they lived, ate and in some cases cooked in



Plate 13: When the temperature drops, the residents receive their friends and eat in the small area in front of their rooms.

colds, rheumatism, skin diseases, tuberculosis and bronchitis have been found to be common among single immigrants living in overcrowded living conditions (Shalabi, 1981).

5. Summary

This chapter has examined and attempted to account for the housing conditions of the single Keralite immigrants. It has provided as detailed information as possible about housing conditions in the U.A.E. in general and in the city of Abu Dhabi in particular, to show how these housing conditions have, to a certain degree, affected the housing of the unskilled and semi-skilled single immigrants. Emphasis has been placed on on certain social problems encountered by the unskilled and semi-skilled single Keralites working in Abu Dhabi. The findings in this chapter provide strong support to those of studies of single immigrants in other Gulf States (Al-Najjar, 1983 , Ministry of Planning, 1982 and Sen, 1986).

What is being argued here is that the housing conditions of the single Keralite immigrants are affected to a certain degree by at least three factors. First, the general housing condition in Abu Dhabi is characterized by shortage in housing units, particularly low-cost housing units, rapidly increasing high rents and absence of laws governing the landlord-tenant relationship. The remarkable efforts by the government to meet the citizens' needs for housing and its decision to provide housing for its white-

collar employees did not, however, solve the problem of housing for the unskilled and semi-skilled immigrants working in both the government and private sectors. These were left to be exploited by the housing market which is monopolized by a small local bourgeoisie.

Second, the socio-economic position of the immigrants has, to a certain degree contributed to the poor housing conditions of the immigrants under study. Given the low income of the unskilled and semi-skilled immigrants, and their desire to save and remit back home as much as possible of their meagre income, they had no choice but to move to distant areas outside Abu Dhabi city or to live collectively in extremely overcrowded houses in the slum areas of the city. The housing conditions of these immigrants were further aggravated by the tendency for each ethnic group to settle in specific locations within the slum areas forming clusters of houses occupied exclusively by those from the same area or state or speaking the same language. Thus, the great majority (71%) of the study group lived in houses of high density (30 persons or more per house), and about one third lived in houses accommodating 50 persons or more with up to 13 persons in a room. Moreover, almost all of the 50 houses in which the study group lived were in a dilapidated condition, rented unfurnished and most of them had inadequate facilities such as lavatories, bathrooms and kitchens. Tenants themselves had to build additional facilities. These appalling housing conditions are reflected in the health of these immigrants.

Third, ties of kinship, friendship and affinity had also influenced the distribution of the study group Keralites in the rooms of the 50 houses in which they were living. Even those who were provided with free accommodation were prepared to share the rent of a room in order to spend weekends and holidays with their relatives, friends and fellow villagers.

Indeed, the importance of social networks to the migrants is such that it merits detailed consideration in its own right. Accordingly, the next chapter will consider the kinship and friendship networks found among the study group, and their role in enabling the migrants to cope with the challenges and difficulties of their situation.

NOTES

1. There are some exceptions, as a few of the expatriates who came and established themselves as businessmen in the northern Emirates of Dubai, Sharjah and other Emirates during the British occupation of the region, have bought some property.
2. A traditional Arab house is usually constituted of several rooms facing a relatively large courtyard. This type of house has become the most common accommodation for the single migrants, after the nationals deserted them for a better housing units.
3. Powerhouse area is a residential neighbourhood in Abu Dhabi City. Its name, "powerhouse", was adopted from the electricity power-station constructed in that area.
4. Although religious allegiance did not prevent Muslim Keralites living together with Christians or Hindus it remained (as will be discussed in the following chapter) a crucial factor distinguishing them from one another and shaping the relationships within the Keralite group.
5. These are the two most sacred shrines of the Muslims, both of which are located in Saudi Arabia.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS: KINSHIP, FRIENDSHIP AND VILLAGE-KIN NETWORKS

1. Introduction

Keralites, like all other immigrants have come to Abu Dhabi to work and earn money. They have therefore had to interact both with local people and with immigrants from other nationalities and from different linguistic-regional groups in India. The relationships between the Keralites under study and the indigenous population on the one hand and other immigrant groups on the other, have been affected by various factors, not least of which is their inferior socio-economic position. Other factors such as occupation, place of work, nationality, ethnicity and cultural background have also affected social relations within the Keralite community and helped to shape their relations with other communities.

This chapter deals with the social relationships of my informants. In examining these, it will be necessary to discuss some important concepts used by researchers on immigration processes, such as "cultural boundaries", "assimilation", "accommodation" and "social networks". It will be argued that the concept of assimilation seems to be irrelevant to a society such as the U.A.E.. Accommodation, on the other hand, seems to be the right concept for

describing the social relations between the immigrants and the host society.

2. Assimilation

Assimilation is the term often used to refer to the processes by which immigrants come to share the values and behaviour of the host society. According to Gordon, there are two dimensions to assimilation: behavioural or cultural assimilation, and structural assimilation. Behavioural assimilation occurs when the immigrants adopt the behaviour and values of the host society, whereas structural assimilation evolves when they enter into all types of primary group relationships with the members of the host society (Gordon, 1954:151). The degree of assimilation depends on the extent to which these processes have taken place. A comprehensive assimilation takes place when the immigrants completely abandon their culture and absorb that of the host society and when they enter into all kind of relationships, including marriage, with members of the host society. Thus, Gordon argue that in America, behavioural or cultural assimilation has taken place to a considerable degree but structural assimilation has not been so extensive (Gordon, 1973:42 and Rosenthal, 1960:255-88).

This point of view has been criticized for overemphasising the degree of cultural similarity between the various groups which are structurally separated. If there are no cultural differences between the various groups in America, then how can one explain and account for the

fact that Protestants, Catholics, Jews and Blacks remain separated groups within which people tend to find their spouses and close friends? According to Greeley, one ought to look at the cultural differences that may exist between these groups, keeping them separated from one another. He asserts that it is these differences that make it possible for a group to remain distinct even if it has coexisted with other groups for a long period of time (Greeley, 1971).

Similarly, in the British context, it has been recognised that there is no such thing as a "British way of life" in a homogeneous Britain; rather, there are many complexities and cultural diversities within British society, which is divided by regional differences, class, education, religion etc. (Patterson, 1968 and Allen, 1971) Thus, as Jeffery indicates:

While there may be a basic level of agreement, there is also a wide range of issues on which British people disagree, or at least put different emphasis. Moreover, these differences cover many aspects of social life, such as family life and leisure pursuits, career ambitions and political orientation. (1976:83)

Under such circumstances, assimilation is neither simple nor inevitable. In the best of cases it is very difficult to treat assimilation as a simple process, let alone measure the degree of assimilation in a certain context. However, in a society such as that of U.A.E., where a large group of migrants from virtually every country in the world is present⁽¹⁾, it seems doubtful whether the concept is relevant at all.

The society of the U.A.E. is a multinational one in which the population is divided into various groups: the indigenous inhabitants and many minority groups of migrants⁽²⁾, a few of which are probably more numerous than the indigenous population itself. Moreover, each group not only has a different nationality but differs from the others in virtually every cultural respect. The members of each group speak a different language, or at least (in the case of the Arab immigrants) a different dialect or accent; they wear distinct clothes, have different religious affiliations and have different perceptions of family life, leisure pursuits, and political issues. Given such diversity, what possible meaning might assimilation have? What is it that that Keralite group (or any other immigrant group) in the U.A.E. is supposed to assimilate into? Whose values and whose behaviour are Keralites expected to adopt?

Even the Arab immigrants (Egyptians, Syrians, Palestinians, Sudanese, Iraqis and others), who share with the local Arabs many cultural traits such as language, religion etc., nonetheless, do not form a single cultural group. Members of each nationality regard themselves, and are perceived by others, as a distinct group, or at least as belonging to a different sub-culture. Of course, the locals and other Arabs do mix freely, but not at all social levels. Indigenous people look on the other Arab immigrants as having a culture that is not pure Arab, that is, not of tribal origin. The indigenous people's relationship with

other Arab immigrants is governed by the old tribal customs and values. As Heard-Bey puts it:

Attitudes, values, behaviour and customs which were formed under quite different circumstances continue to be essential to the family's life; they are equally essential ingredients in the interaction of today's multinational society and the newly created State.(1983:2)

Thus, the sharing of many physical and cultural markers by some groups of people may not necessarily mean that they belong to a single cultural group, whereas a few differences may be considered as substantial and therefore separate one group from the others.

It would be possible to draw up cultural inventories for Punjabi Muslims and Punjabi Sikhs, and establish that in language, dress, diet, notions of *izzet*, the giving of dowries to daughters when they marry and so forth there are many similarities between Sikhs and Muslims. However, to them, differences in religious allegiance (and the political allegiance implied by religious differences in this context) are the crucial element which demarcates them from one another and these differences are echoed in subtle differences in dress, language (for instance the forms of greeting) and diet (Jeffery, 1976:87).

Similarly, an outsider could easily draw up cultural inventories for Muslim, Hindu and Christian Keralites and come up with a long list of physical and cultural similarities between them, such as physical appearance, colour, dress, aspects of diet, marriage customs, etc.. However, differences in religious affiliation, as will be

discussed shortly, remains a critical component which demarcates them from one another.

Barth renounces the notion that ethnic groups can be appropriately defined in terms of cultural traits. Instead he concentrates on how distinct ethnic groups continue to co-exist with each other through time in the same region, even when the members of one ethnic group have relationships with members of the other groups. To understand this process, Barth argues, the focus of analysis should be on the boundaries between distinct ethnic groups and the mechanisms by which these boundaries are maintained. For, as Barth argues, it is these mechanisms that organize the relationships between the members in various ethnic group. In Barth's words:

The critical focus of investigation from this point of view becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, and not the cultural stuff which it encloses. The boundaries to which we refer are of course social boundaries, though they may have territorial counterparts. If the group maintains its identity when members interact with others, this entails criteria for determining membership and ways of signalling membership and exclusion (1969:15).

To demarcate an ethnic group, one ought to look at the way different types of social relationships are patterned. Generally speaking, a distinction can be made between two types of relationships: single-strand and multiplex. Single-strand relationships involve one content, such as the relationship between an employer and his employee or between

a shopkeeper and shopper. Inter-ethnic relationships are generally of single-strand type. Multiplex relationships involve several strands. They are not limited to a certain activity but cover all sort of activities. Multiplex relationships are concentrated inside the ethnic group (Jeffery, 1976:86)

The patterning of social relationships into single-strand or multiplex depends largely on a system of marks or signals through which individuals communicate with each other their membership of a specific ethnic group. When people meet, these signals or marks (cultural and physical features) not only indicate their membership of one ethnic group or another and imply their allegiance to different basic value orientations, but they also indicate the kind of relationship that can be developed when they interact. In Barth's words:

The identification of another person as a fellow member of an ethnic group implies a sharing of criteria for evaluation and judgement. It thus entails the assumption that the two are fundamentally 'playing the same game', and this means that there is between them the potential for diversification and expansion of their social relationship to cover eventually all different sectors and domains of activity. On the other hand, a dichotomization of others as strangers, as members of another ethnic group, implies a recognition of limitations on shared understanding, differences in criteria for judgement of values and performance, and a restriction of interaction to sectors of assumed common understanding and mutual interest (1969:15).

In this way a systematic set of rules for conduct of inter-ethnic relationship is generated and social relations

are patterned. As people of different ethnic groups interact, the "signals of ethnicity" not only indicate the identity of the actors involved but also imply the kind of social relationship that can be developed between them and at the same time indicate what sort of social relationship must remain within the group and be the locus of cultural differences between the various co-existing ethnic groups (Jeffery, 1976:86)

Social relationships between different ethnic groups are also patterned by the socio-economic position of each group. Immigrants in the U.A.E. (particularly unskilled and semi-skilled Asians) occupy a pre-determined inferior position in both the economic and the social sphere. Regardless of their ethnicity, nationality or race, immigrants in the U.A.E. not only do not have free access to various economic activities but are also socially segregated from the indigenous population. As discussed in Chapter 7, immigrants (particularly single immigrants) are living in spatially separated areas. Moreover, immigrants, Arab or non-Arab, are not allowed to join existing local clubs and societies, are not allowed to enrol their children in the national education system and so forth. Thus, each immigrant group has had to create its own societies and clubs and its own schools to educate its children and so on. Such arrangements minimize the interaction between the migrants and the indigenous population and between the various ethnic groups within the immigrant population, and therefore weaken the corresponding social relationships.

3. Accommodation

The involvement of the Keralites in economic activities in Abu Dhabi does not necessarily entail their involvement in extensive social relationship with the indigenous population or with migrants of other nationalities or other ethnic groups. Their participation in the work sphere, however, entails some degree of conformity to the host society's norms, values and most importantly, laws. Desai, in her study of Indian immigrants in Britain writes:

Participation is, of course inevitable; the host society provides the jobs and the Indian immigrants come to earn money. There are two possible forms which the resulting integration can take. The first is 'assimilation', in which immigrants come to share the attitudes, behaviour and values of the social group within the host society with which they identify themselves. The second is 'accommodation', in which the immigrants accept the relationships available to them and act on them with some degree of conformity, but do not share the bulk of attitudes and values which are part of the host society. Assimilative participation extends far beyond the work-situation; accommodative participation tends to be restricted to it (1963:68).

Desai observes that because their culture differs significantly from that of the host society, the Indian immigrants in Britain do not fully participate in every sort of activity. Participation in every sphere of the host society's social life would necessitate a comprehensive cultural change. Indian immigrants in Britain have not experienced extensive cultural changes. Most of them have merely accepted those cultural changes which are necessary

to acquire jobs and make money. Moreover, the Indians in the factories studied by Desai often perceived themselves not as individual employees but as immigrant groups. The English workers too, treated them as an immigrant group, thereby limiting their participation as individuals (Desai, 1963:87).

These observations are not dissimilar from those of Jeffery's regarding the Pakistanis in Bristol. Except for the very few who supported themselves from income earned by working within their ethnic community, almost all of the Pakistanis in Bristol had to work outside their ethnic group. Pakistani men's participation in the work sphere forced them to make adjustments such as accepting jobs that they would never accept in Pakistan, working for longer hours, working on shifts and, most importantly, working on Friday, the Muslim holy day. Apart from this, however, the Pakistanis' participation in the work sphere did not result in extensive relationships with their British work-mates. Work-mates did not visit each other and because the Muslim Pakistanis did not go to the pubs, go dancing or even eat at British restaurants, their contact with the British people outside the workplace was very limited. Even in the workplace they seemed to mix very little with the British workers.

Another sector in which the Pakistanis of Bristol were forced to participate was the English educational system. Because there are no full-time Pakistani schools, Pakistani

families had no choice but to send their children to schools controlled by the Bristol Education Department. It was only within these spheres (work and schools) that "single-stranded" relationships between the Pakistanis and the British developed (Jeffery, 1976:90-93).

4. The Keralites' Relationships with Other Groups

My own observations are generally similar to those outlined above. The Keralite immigrants in Abu Dhabi do accommodate but avoid assimilation. The resulting relationships between the Keralites and other groups in Abu Dhabi are fleeting and single-stranded. The relationships inside the Keralite group are rather different, as will be discussed in the next section.

The relationship of the Keralite immigrants with the locals, with other immigrants from the Indian sub-continent (Pakistanis and Bangladeshis) and even with Indian immigrants from different linguistic-regional groups was one of avoidance. As each national and linguistic-regional group lacked common cultural interests with the other groups, there was virtually no social interaction between the Keralites under study and other immigrants living in the same neighbourhood. The Keralites have their own formal voluntary organizations such as the Kerala Social Centre, the Indian Islamic Centre and the Malayali Society. They also have many informal associations which sponsor their own kind of entertainments and social, cultural, sports and other activities.

In addition to the desire of each group to exclude itself from and avoid interaction with other groups, there were other factors that may have helped to strengthen the negative relationships between the various groups of immigrants from the Indian sub-continent living in the same area. The clustering of a large number of immigrants belonging to the same nationality and/or the same linguistic-regional group living in adjacent houses made it natural for immigrants of each group to make parties and friends from their own respective cultural-linguistic-regional groups. The presence of a relatively large number of people belonging to the same ethnic group also facilitated the emergence of what can be termed an "internal economy". Many small shops, restaurants, video and audio shops, etc. had been established to provide specific goods and services particularly for the ethnic group concerned. Such internal economy minimizes the contact between various ethnic groups and helps to keep the relationship between them very limited.

The area in which these immigrants lived had no common neighbourhood activities at a group level except for the two small mosques, where Muslims of all nationalities could perform their prayers collectively five times a day. After prayer was completed, each group went its own way. Hence, if a relationship was ever established, it would be at an inter-personal level and single-stranded only.

Even at work, the relationship between the Keralites and other ethnic groups was kept to a minimum and rarely extended outside the workplace. To be sure, one major sphere in which the Keralites under study might have made contact with the local people was at the workplace. But since the great majority of them were engaged in unskilled and semi-skilled manual jobs which the local people do not normally engage in, there was no interaction between them and the local people in this sphere.

A Keralite immigrant might sometimes develop a friendship in the workplace with another immigrant from a different nationality or a distinct linguistic-regional group. A small proportion (8.9 per cent or 91 persons) of the Keralites under investigation claimed that they had made friends from other nationalities, mainly Pakistanis, Bangladeshis or Indians from different linguistic-regional groups. Nonetheless, such friendships hardly extended outside the workplace, unless they were forced to live together in accommodation provided by the employer, such as was the case of Husain who worked as a pesticide labourer in the Ministry of Defence. Husain had no choice but to share the room allocated to him along with two other workers; an Indian and a Pakistani. Of these 91 Keralites, 17 persons only said that they sometimes visited their non-Keralite friends, 22 reported that only on social occasions did they go to see their friends and 52 said they had never visited their non-Keralite friends. During my fieldwork I have very rarely seen Keralites from different districts visiting each

other, let alone immigrants from different linguistic-regional groups or nationalities.

These findings are consistent with those of studies of Indian and Pakistani immigrants elsewhere (Desai, 1963; Jeffery, 1976; and Al-Najjar, 1983). In her research on Indian immigrants in Britain, Desai found that

The relations between Indians and non-Indians neighbours were to a great extent negative... the relationship, if at all, must be established at an inter-personal level. The male immigrants develop a friendship with neighbours at the local public house. But it does not extend outside the pub... The Indian immigrants recognize as neighbours only those who belong to their own linguistic-regional group, and find this sufficient. They ignore the rest (1963:29-30).

In addition to the Keralites' tendency to insulate themselves inside their ethnic group and maintain a minimum contact with the local people and other immigrant groups, there are other factors that may have had some effect in maintaining the avoidance relationship between the Keralites and the locals, on the one hand, and between Keralites and other immigrants (particularly Arab immigrants) on the other hand. Each immigrant group conceived the other groups as competitors. Arab immigrants, for instance, perceived the Asian immigrants in general as competitors who, by accepting lower wages, reduced the Arabs' chances of getting access to various sources of employment. The Arab immigrants therefore treated the Asian immigrants with hostility. An example of such hostility is that experienced by Imtiyaz, whom we first

met in Chapter 5 as the tally clerk in a clearing and forwarding company. The hostility of his Arab supervisor forced Imtiyaz to enter into violent conflict with him, as a consequence of which Imtiyaz lost his job with the company.

The local people, for their part, look on the immigrants (both Asian and Arab) as a cause of inflation and as having an unfavourable impact on the host society by increasing the crime rate and forming a potential danger to the country's security. Moreover, the indigenous group look at the immigrants as a group of foreigners who prevent them getting full benefit from the public services. The mass media have been an influential factor augmenting the potential danger (true or imagined) of the Asian immigrants to the internal security of the country and to the indigenous culture. Even in the academic arena, the danger and consequences resulting from the presence of the Asian immigrants have been exaggerated⁽³⁾. All of this has resulted in the local people developing a resentful and even hostile attitude towards the immigrants, particularly Asian immigrants (Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis) because they form the largest community and are at the bottom of the social hierarchy⁽⁴⁾.

The Keralites, on the other hand, seem to be aware of the locals' and other Arab immigrants' attitudes towards them and, in turn, have developed negative attitudes towards the locals and other Arab immigrants. I have often heard stories about the locals' ill-treatments of the Keralites.

One Keralite in the in-depth study who was working at an oil filling station commented on this issue in the following words:

I am sorry to tell you that the locals and the Arab immigrants in general do not respect us or any other non-Arab immigrants. Because they are rich and we work for them they look down on us and treat us as if we were sub-human or slaves. They often call us names and when we ignore them and do not react to what they say they think we are cowards. But we are not. We merely don't want to lose our jobs or damage our peaceful image. If I did not control myself I would be involved in many fights every day. You ask me about friendship? We want them to treat us as human, never mind as friends.

The Keralites were also aware of institutionalized discrimination against the immigrants in general and against the Asians in particular. Another Keralite narrated the following incident:

One afternoon I went to the public clinic in the Old Hospital. I was not feeling very well and had a very painful stomach-ache. I went straight away to the reception desk to secure my turn to see the physician. There were a few people sitting in the waiting room waiting for their turn to see the doctor, and some of them were locals. After a while, a few more people came into the clinic. I spent more than one hour in the waiting room waiting for my name to be called. At first I did not know what was going on, as this was my first visit to the clinic. But after a while I began to realize that all the local people who came before and who came after me had seen the doctor and only two or three non-locals who came before me had seen the doctor. I approached the clerk at the reception desk who was a Keralite and asked him in Malayalam about what was going on. He told me that the procedure here was not first come, first served. Here, they take three locals first followed by one non-local; so I should make a

complaint only if a non-local person who had come after me was seen by the doctor before me..... He added, "this is their country and their hospital". You see, we are discriminated against even in such situation. They (the locals) see themselves as the masters and we the slaves.

Almost all of the Keralites in the in-depth study reported that the only relationship between them and the local people was that which occurs between an employee and his employer. In one of the houses, I was told, only two local Arabs had entered the house; myself and the landlord.

There is also an ecological dimension to this negative relationship. In Abu Dhabi there is a geographical segregation between the locals and the non-locals, and to a lesser degree between non-local families and non-local single immigrants. The great majority of the locals in Abu Dhabi city live in a spatially segregated area. The tribal nature of the local people has been reflected in the government's housing policy. According to this policy, designated areas relatively far from the city centre were allocated for each tribe. The area was then divided by the municipality and distributed among the members of each tribe to build houses (usually villas) for themselves. Thus each area is almost exclusively inhabited by members of one tribe, although in some areas one finds a few villas rented to foreign diplomats, to the government or to oil companies for their high-ranking foreign employees. Citizens who acquired their citizenship through naturalization were also assigned designated areas in which to build their own houses, according to their original nationality.

Immigrants accompanied by their families lived in flats in the multi-storey buildings in and around the city centre. The single immigrants, especially the unskilled and semi-skilled, were forced to live in relatively remote places or in the slum areas of the city. Moreover, the houses occupied by single Asian have increasingly been viewed as a source of disturbances and crime and as a potential danger to the internal security of the country, so that greater segregation of the single Asian immigrants is needed. Thus the single Keralites (as well as other single Asian immigrants) were not only geographically segregated but also a target of the hostile attitudes of the indigenous population and Arab immigrant communities.

Only three Keralites only in the in-depth study claimed that they had developed friendships with local persons. Two of them were working as caretakers; one in the Ministry of Education and the other in the Ministry of Finance and Industry. Each of them had developed a friendship with one local person working as caretaker at the same place. But, again, this friendship did not extend outside the workplace. They never exchanged home-visits with their local work-mates. The third Keralite claimed to have developed a strong relationship with his local sleeping partner.

Friendship relations may sometime develop between a Keralite and his local partner in some business or other, even if the local partner is only a sleeping partner. Mutual economic interest makes the relationship between the

partners stronger than that between a Keralite and his employer. Aslam, whom we first met in Chapter 5 as one of the four Keralites who had established small businesses, described his relationship with his sleeping partner, Awadh, in the following terms:

Awadh is a very good man. I first met him when I applied for a job in the National Hotels Company. Awadh interviewed me and gave me a job as an office assistant. I worked in Awadh's office for two years. He was not like the others, always smiling, and when he asked for something he did it politely and never shouted like most of the others in the company. One day he asked me if I would like to be transferred to one of the hotels as a helper in the kitchen. He told me that the salary would be a little better. I worked in the kitchen for almost four years. It was during this time the idea of opening a restaurant came into my mind and when I communicated my intentions to my brother-in-law and my room-mates they encouraged me and even offered financial help.

One day I approached Awadh and told him about my plans and asked him to be my sleeping partner. I would pay him 15 per cent of the net profit or 6,000 Derhams in the first year, 10,000 Derhams in the second year and 15,000 Derhams every year thereafter. He agreed and helped me to get a release from the company.

We have never come into conflict since 1981, the year I established the restaurant. Awadh never asked to increase the agreed upon amount of money (15,000 Derhams) he receives every year nor does he interfere in my business. He often comes to the restaurant and has a cup of tea with me. When there is a special event in the Kerala Social Centre, the Indian Islamic Centre or the Malayali Society, I make sure that he receives an invitation card. Sometimes, particularly in the two Eids, I visit him at home and when I go to Kerala I bring him some Indian crafts. Awadh helped me with the visas of three relatives of mine without taking any money, and two of them were employed through him in the National Hotels Company. I really respect this man and treat him like a friend and not only as a partner.

Nonetheless, relationships such as this often remain narrowly based on economic relations in which the immigrant occupies an inferior position. The local sleeping partner who is, at the same time, the immigrant's Kafeel, can exploit his Keralite partner by demanding more money every time the business licence is to be renewed. Moreover, the local partner can (and in many instances does) take possession of the business; after all, he is legally a 51 per cent partner. Keralites who established a business in partnership with a local person were eager to keep a good relationship with their partners (real or sleeping) for obvious reasons. Since non-citizens need a local partner to establish any business, the self employed Keralites depended on their local partners to start their own business and then keep it going. Most importantly they did not want their partners to raise the agreed upon amount of money they levied from them every year. Thus, keeping a good relationship with the local partner can be seen as a strategic move on the part of the immigrants, to protect their own economic interest. I have heard quite few stories of Keralites who established some business and kept it going for a year or so, after which their local partners took possession of the business.

5. Relationship Within the Keralite Group

In this part the focus is on the relationships within the Keralite community under study. The concept of "social network"⁽⁵⁾ seems to be very useful here, not only to

explain relationships within the Keralite community in Abu Dhabi but also to elucidate how the immigrants' cultural background and their ties with people in the sending society may influence their behaviour in the receiving society (Dahya, 1972 and Jeffery, 1976).

The Keralites' networks in Abu Dhabi and the relationships within these networks seem to be affected by various factors such as kinship, place of origin in Kerala and religious affiliation. Although it is difficult to measure the effect of each of these factors independently of the others, it seems that relationships between the Keralites under study are more likely to be conducted between kin than non-kin, between persons coming from the same village than those coming from different villages, and between those who belong to the same religious affiliation, than between people belong to different religions.

As was discussed in the preceding chapter, the distribution of the Keralites in each of the 50 houses depended largely on kinship, affinity and villages of origin. Inside the Keralites' houses, social interaction between the tenants of one room and another was kept to a minimum, with the effect that relationships revolved around kinship and village groups. There was almost total separation between the Keralites from different districts, different sub-districts and even different villages, who were living in different rooms. In the houses where there were separate bathrooms and kitchens for every room, the

separation between the tenants of different rooms was even greater and interaction was minimal. Each room, the small area in front of it, the bathroom and the kitchen designated to it formed, more or less, a separate and independent housing unit. In the houses where the tenants of two rooms shared a single bathroom and kitchen, there were strict conventions regarding the utilization of the common facilities, and day to day behaviour was more or less formal. In these houses, tenants of each room had their own refrigerator, their own oven, their own cooking utensils and their own household goods in one corner of the kitchen. In many cases, where the kitchens were small, refrigerators were kept in the rooms. I came across several cases where, for the sake of privacy, the tenants had built additional bathrooms and kitchens, and in some cases the tenants cooked inside their rooms, or on a table in front of their rooms in order to avoid any unnecessary conflict with the tenants of the other room.

These housing arrangements not only helped restrict the interaction between the tenants occupying different rooms but also made it very difficult for the tenants to pick quarrels readily. Occasionally, quarrels did occur between two Keralites from different rooms, but these were always non-violent and were settled immediately through the intervention of other tenants from both rooms. Quarrels between Keralites living in different rooms occurred mainly where the tenants were sharing the same bathroom or the same kitchen and when the conventions were repeatedly violated.

Conflict between Keralites living in the same room was even less frequent and dealt with in the same way except, in this case, only the tenants of the same room were involved.

Although they were living in the same house, Keralites coming from different districts, sub-districts and even villages within the sub-district were rarely visited by each other in their rooms except on very limited occasions such as when someone was sick or when someone had just arrived from Kerala. Sometimes they talked to each other in the house courtyard, but that was all. Normally they did not eat with each other or develop friendships; nor did they borrow money from each other.

As we have seen, there were a few cases where people coming from different districts and at the same time belonging to different religions were living in the same room. As might be expected from the foregoing, the relationships between them were not as strong as those between Keralites who were from the same village or belonged to the same religion. In such cases, the relationship tended to be more formal than informal. The housing conditions in Abu Dhabi had given some of the Keralites no choice but to live together in one room, regardless of their religion. Living together, however, did not necessarily mean that they entered into multiplex relationships or developed close friendships.

As mentioned earlier, there were seventeen rooms only in which Keralites coming from different districts were

living together. One of these rooms, for instance, was occupied by three Muslim Keralites from the District of Alleppey and two Hindus coming from the District of Trivandrum. The three Muslim Keralites cooked and ate their food separately whereas the two Hindus ate their food in a restaurant and very rarely cooked at their room. The Muslims associated with other village-kin Muslims and the Hindus exchanged visits with their Hindu friends. Some of the Muslims, however, reported that they had made Hindu or Christian friends and vice versa.

Imtiyaz, for instance, was one of the few Muslims who stated that they had made some Hindu and Christian friends. Through his activities in the Malayali Society and the Kerala Social Centre, Imtiyaz made quite a few non-Muslim friends. Imtiyaz had two years of college education. He was not very concerned about religion. "I am an art lover", he used to say. In Kerala he used to write short stories and plays, some of which were played on "street theatres" and recorded and broadcast by local radio stations in Kerala. He was a well-known person, not only in his village but in the surrounding villages as well. When he came to Abu Dhabi the first thing he did was to join in the Malayali Society and The Kerala Social Centre (he did not join the Indian Islamic Centre). He was already known to many of the members. In Abu Dhabi, Imtiyaz continued his writing activities and established with other members in the Malayai Society a theatre group. He spent most of his free time writing short stories and plays. Most of his works were played on the

Society's stage by Keralite children whom he himself had trained through the theatre group.

Imtiyaz's activities in the Society put him in contact not only with many single Hindu and Christian Keralites who shared with him the same writing and theatrical interests but also with many Keralite families whose children were members of the theatre group. Nonetheless, Imtiyaz's relationship with his Hindu and Christian friends did not extend beyond the Malayali Society and did not involve his brother or his village kin and room-mates. Imtiyaz never visited his Hindu and Christian friends at their homes, nor did he invite any of them to his room, except for one Christian friend, Gary, who helped him twice to find good jobs. He knew Gary through his twelve year-old son who was a member of the theatre group. He visited Gary in his house where he lived with his family more than once, but Imtiyaz never invited him to his room. Imtiyaz explained,

Gary is a very good person. He helped me a lot and I am grateful to him. I have visited him on many occasions such as Christmas and New Year. But I cannot invite him to my room. You see, my brother and I live with three more people in one room and I do not think it is proper to invite a person like Gary to my room.

Nonetheless, those who had made inter-religion friendship were the exception, and their friendships were not of the kind that developed between Keralites coming from the same village or belonging to the same religion. They were fair-weather friendships.

Just like the boundaries maintained between the Keralites and other linguistic-regional groups and nationalities, Keralites (particularly Muslims) maintained some boundaries in relation to each other based on religion. Although there were two Keralite voluntary associations in Abu Dhabi in addition to the Indian Club and any Keralite could join any or all of the three, the Muslim Keralites had established their own centre. Despite its name - "The Indian Islamic Centre" - almost all of its 2,000 members were Keralite Muslims.

These boundaries, however, allowed for some contact between Keralites from different districts or of different religions and did not prevent them from helping each other in time of need. One kind of help that might be offered to a Keralite, just by virtue of being a Keralite and regardless of the district or village he had come from or his religious affiliation, was to lodge a newcomer for a short time, at least until he had found a job or had moved to live with people from the same village.

Shan, whom we first met in Chapter 5 as the mason who was recruited by an agency in Bombay to work in Abu Dhabi for a construction company that did not exist, provided one of many examples of the relationships that may be enjoyed by the Keralites simply because they are Keralites. Although Shan was a Hindu from a small village in the district of Palghat, he was hosted by Ommar, a Muslim from Chavakkad village in Trichur district. When he found himself alone at

Abu Dhabi Airport not knowing where to go, Shan sought the help of Ibraheem, the first Keralite he saw outside the airport. Ibraheem, who was with Shan on the same flight, was waiting for his friend, Ommar. Ommar was supposed to meet him at the airport. When Ommar arrived at the airport Ibraheem introduced him to Shan and told him about Shan's problem. Ommar took them both to his room where he lived with other seven Keralites, all of whom were Muslims from the same village of Chavakkad in Trichur District. Shan stayed with them as a guest for ten days. During this time Shan located three Hindu Keralites from a neighbouring village in the same district he had come from, living in one room of a five-room house in the same neighbourhood. So he moved to stay with them. He has been living with them ever since. They helped him straighten out his legal status and eventually to find a mason's job in a construction company. Now Shan and his three Hindu room-mates are very good friends. In contrast, Shan's relationship with Ibraheem and Ommar came to an end. "I have seen Ibraheem and Ommar once or twice in the Malayali Society." Shan commented.

Another service that Keralites are used to providing for each other, regardless of origin is to help newcomers and those who have lost their jobs to find work. I have already mentioned in Chapter 5 some examples of the ways in which the Keralites under study helped each other to find jobs. Here it should be added that the relationships which these reciprocal services entailed tended to be transient and the links tended to be fleeting and single-stranded.

They did not involve any further obligations or develop into multiplex relationships. Such relationships seemed to be dictated by the specific conditions and circumstances in which the Keralites were working and living and usually ended once the situation which initiated them ceased to exist.

In the ordinary course of events in Kerala, such relationships would not occur. People in Kerala would seek help from their own close relatives or intimate friends. Ever since the abolition of the caste system in Kerala, people belonging to different religious affiliation or different castes have been interacting freely in the public places; however, the caste system is still operative in Kerala (particularly in the rural areas) for identifying and locating groups in the social hierarchy. In the private sphere of life, people in Kerala do not mix freely. Although in public places the untouchables, the Harijans (low castes), no longer have to maintain distance between them and those in the upper castes and can be seen in tea shops and restaurants together with Brahmins and Nairs (higher castes) they do, nonetheless, have to be careful not to enter the houses of members of the higher castes (Hartmann, et al., 1989:224-7). Only on special occasions, such as marriage or death, do people belonging to different castes or different religions go to each other's houses, and even on these occasions only the immediate neighbours are invited and certain rules have to be followed. Those belonging to lower castes are not allowed to sit with the higher caste

people (Hartmann, et al., 1989:224). In Abu Dhabi, for very practical reasons, such restrictional practices are put to a halt, if only temporarily.

One last example of the kind of relationship that may develop between the Keralites in Abu Dhabi regardless of their religious affiliation and place of origin in Kerala is that between a Keralite retail shop owner and his Keralite customers. Keralites are expected to buy their goods from retail shops belong to Keralites. Since the competition in this line of economic activity is very intense (almost all of the retail shops are owned and managed by immigrants in partnership with local people), a Keralite owner of a small grocery shop or a restaurant derives his customers mainly from the Keralite community. Although most of the Keralites under study paid cash for their goods, buying on credit was never refused. Credit might sometimes be extended to a month or two.

The grocer-customer relationship is not only an economic transaction. A large number of the Keralites used the post office box of these grocery shops and restaurants as mailing addresses⁽⁶⁾, and many Keralites, especially those from the same village as the grocer, had at one point or another borrowed small amounts of money, interest-free, from their grocer. Some grocers were also involved in usury. Such people, however, were frequently criticized by community members, particularly the Muslims, as usury is not allowed in Islam; the talk would be that such a person was

an opportunist who instead of fulfilling his village-kin obligations was exploiting them.

6. Kinship and Village Group Networks

Kin networks in the community under study consisted of small groups of four persons or less. They were linked to each other by blood relation - brothers, cousins, nephews etc. - or through marriage - brothers-in-law or sons-fathers-in-law and so on. Keralites in Abu Dhabi kept very close contact with their close relatives as well as with their distant kin and more often than not lived in the same room. Relatives were expected to fulfil their obligations as migrants in a foreign country; take care of each other and provide help to those relatives who needed it.

As was discussed in preceding chapters, almost 85 per cent of the Keralites under study (871 person) had at least one relative working in the U.A.E., and the migration of more than 51 per cent of them were initially facilitated by their relatives working in the U.A.E. Relationships within these rather small kin-networks were very dense and multiplex. The strands of kinship were utilized as a base on which social relations such as friendship and mutual aid were conducted. Having relatives in the host country provided a kind of security in the insecure working and living environment of Abu Dhabi. Those who had a brother, a cousin, or even a distant relative, considered themselves very lucky people, because they had someone to rely upon in time of need. We have already discussed in preceding

chapters some of the mutual aid and support relatives provided for each other even before a relative had come to the host country. We need not describe these processes again here. Nonetheless, before going on to describe the village-kin networks there are a few important points to be made.

Relatives - particularly close kin such as brothers, cousins and brothers-in-law - who were in Abu Dhabi at the time of the study, were more often than not living together in the same room. Those formed 549 person or about 63 per cent of the 871 Keralites who at the time of the study had one or more relatives in the U.A.E. Nearly 19 per cent (165 persons) lived in the same house with their relatives but in different rooms. Eight per cent only reported that they did not live with their relatives, usually either because their relatives were working and living in another city in the U.A.E. or they were not very close kin.

Even living in separate rooms or different houses, relatives maintained very close relationships. They kept visiting each other regularly, at least once a week. Even when the relatives were living in different cities, contacts were kept up through letters and telephone calls. They also exchanged visits, but not as often as those living in Abu Dhabi. Quite a few times during the fieldwork, I met with Keralites who had come all the way from the other Emirates, just to visit their relatives and spend the weekend with them.

It seemed that migration had strengthened the kinship relations among the Keralite migrants, enhancing the relationships between those who were only related to each other through distant kinship links. The importance of having close kin in Abu Dhabi for intimate social relationship and mutual aid motivated those with no close relatives to invoke and activate their distant kinship ties which were latent or unrealized back in Kerala, thus replacing close kin with rather remotely connected relatives. I have met quite a few cases where close relatives were replaced by relatives very remotely linked to each other. One such case illustrating this is that of Ramaish and Sanjay.

Ramaish, who appeared in Chapter 5 as Sham's friend and room-mate, was a 38 year-old Hindu Keralite who was recruited in 1978 as a carpenter for a construction company in Abu Dhabi. Sanjay, who was also a carpenter, was remotely related to Ramaish through marriage. Ramaish's aunt's eldest grandson was married to Sanjay's sister. Sanjay found a carpenter's job in Abu Dhabi through a recruiting agency but before he came to Abu Dhabi in January 1980 he managed through his sister's husband to get hold of Ramaish's telephone number in Abu Dhabi. He telephoned Ramaish from Kerala and informed him that he was coming to Abu Dhabi and that he would appreciate it if he would meet him at the airport. Although he had not seen Sanjay since the first time four years previously - during the marriage of his aunt's grandson to Sanjay's sister - Ramaish responded

positively to Sanjay's telephone call. Ramaish met Sanjay at the airport and brought him to his room. Sanjay had been living with Ramaish ever since and when Sanjay lost his job in October, 1982 Ramaish helped him get another carpenter's job in the same company he was working for. They had established a very good relationship and treated each other as real brothers. "Sanjay is no less than my younger brother", Ramaish commented. Sanjay, too, deals with Ramaish as if he was his elder brother: "... I would never do anything without consulting Ramaish. ... I am very fortunate indeed to have someone like Ramaish in Abu Dhabi".

In the ordinary course of events in the sending society, Ramaish and Sanjay might not have met after the first time, let alone develop a strong close-kin-like friendship. Ramaish lived in one village and Sanjay lived in another a hundred miles away. They hardly knew each other before coming to Abu Dhabi. In Abu Dhabi, however, their distant and tenuous kinship link has become the base for developing close and strong ties between them.

When someone is visiting Kerala he is expected to contact his relatives, even those working and living in other cities, and let them know that he is going to Kerala days before he leaves so if any of them wishes to send letters, light presents or even small amounts of money to his family back home he will have enough time to do so. In many instances, taking gifts for relatives causes some trouble and inconvenience to those visiting Kerala. The

families of two relatives working in Abu Dhabi may not live in the same village or even the same district back home. One might have to travel a long distance to deliver such gifts. Taking letters, money and gifts from a relative in the host country and delivering them to his family was considered by the Keralites as a duty.

Migrants visiting Kerala are not expected to take heavy presents for their relatives' families nor would their relatives burden them with such requests, because any Keralite visiting home on a holiday would be laden with his own presents and other things. Generally speaking, those who visit Kerala every year do not usually send presents with their relatives, though sometimes they send some money. It is only those relatives who, for one reason or another, cannot afford to visit Kerala every year who send light presents to one or two members of their families. Presents sent with relatives normally take the form of a small gold ear ring for a little daughter, a gold chain or ring for a mother or sister, a shirt or pair of jeans for a college-going son or brother, a small bottle of perfume for a wife, and so on.

Although relatives in Abu Dhabi form very close-knit networks and provide much mutual help to each other, their success in fulfilling these obligations depend, to a large extent, on rather larger networks: the village-kin networks. Moreover, more than 15 per cent of the Keralites under study had no relatives in the U.A.E. when they first came to the

country. They had to rely on their village-kin. When a new Keralite arrived in Abu Dhabi, for example, not only his relatives or his room-mates would help him find an employment but every Keralite in the house would do his best in this regard. That someone needed a job would be conveyed to every one in the house, particularly those from the same village, and they in turn would communicate such information to their work-mates and so on. Similar acts of reciprocal aid such as obtaining a visa for a relative or a friend, finding a new Kafeel and straightening out the legal position of a migrant, needed a broader chain of links and a wider information network that went beyond the kin-network. Thus, Keralites entered into what may be called village-kin networks.

When the tenants of two rooms were from the same village or even two neighbouring villages, the density of the relationship was much greater than if they were from different districts or sub districts. Keralites who had come from the same village had usually built up a close-knit network. Mere fellow villagers in Kerala had become in Abu Dhabi room-mates, work-mates and close friends. Those living in the same house visited each other in their rooms almost daily and any news from the village received by one of them was always shared by everybody from the same village, even those living in different houses. They often shared food and borrowed money from each other. Living in different houses did not prevent the village-kin from exchanging visits. Residential clustering had facilitated such social

activities but, because everybody was busy during the day, visits usually took place in the afternoon or at night. The relationships between the village-kin did not break down even when someone moved from Abu Dhabi to another city in the U.A.E.. During the fieldwork I met a few who had once been working in Abu Dhabi but were now working in other cities or vice versa, who were visiting their previous room-mates and village-kin.

Exchanges of visits and hospitality were only one aspect of the village-kin relationship. The members of the village-kin group helped each other in various ways. We have already mentioned in earlier chapters some of the various kinds of help provided by the village-kin to their fellow villagers. However, a few additional points in this regard are noteworthy.

In cases of emergency or if one of the village-kin group was in desperate need, financial or otherwise, beyond the ability of his relatives and his room-mates, then everyone from the same village would help, even those who lived in different houses or even different areas. Such was the case of Abdulrehman, in an incident which took place during the time of my fieldwork.

Abdulrehman, a Muslim immigrant from Cundore village, had received a letter from his younger brother informing him of the death of their father just three months after his return from Kerala. Everybody in the house visited him in his room to express their condolences. He took the letter to

his employer who gave him one month unpaid leave. Abdulrehman had no relatives in Abu Dhabi to turn to for help, so his room-mates made up a small committee of three persons to collect donations to pay for his air ticket and other expenses. Almost everyone in the house donated some money to this cause, including those who were not from the same village, but the greater help came from his friends and his fellow villagers. The committee tried to contact as many people from Cundore village as it could and was able to collect in just two days more than two thousand Derhams. The Cundore Muslim Society (discussed in more detail shortly) provided him with 3,000 Derhams as an interest-free loan. Being from Cundore village, Abdulrehman was entitled to get help from all of his fellow villagers who were living in the same house and from those living in other houses. "I am from Cundore and if they (the other Keralites from Cundore village) do not help me who would?", Abdulrehman commented. Keralites from the same village considered such help as obligation towards their village-kin.

Being from the same village brought Keralites closer to each other. No matter where they lived in Abu Dhabi. Keralites coming from the same village entered into what can be called an informal voluntary association, often named after the village. Especially in the case of Muslim Keralites, such associations involved all of the people from that village. These associations provided some sort of protection and security, not only for its members but, in many instances, for other Keralites as well.

Cundore Muslim Jama'at or Society was one of many such Muslim associations in Abu Dhabi⁽⁷⁾. This association was established in 1967 by ten immigrants (two of them still in Abu Dhabi) from the village of Cundore in the district of Malappuram. At the time of the study it had more than 150 members. The society has an elected president, a vice-president, a general secretary, three joint secretaries and a membership fees collector. Each member paid 10 Derhams a month. Since the society was informal, i.e. not registered at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, all the money collected as membership fees was deposited in the bank in an account under the name of the president and the general secretary.

A large part of the society's funds were used to rent houses from the local landlords and re-rent them to Keralite immigrants. This activity was not intended to make a profit although sometimes it did. The main purpose was to provide housing for those who desperately needed it. One evening I was in one of the Keralites' houses conducting interviews when I was shown a notice from the Municipality of Abu Dhabi, written in Arabic, notifying the tenants to vacate the premises within one week, as the Municipality was going to demolish all the houses that were standing in the way of a prospective road. Two of these houses were occupied by Keralite immigrants. The total number of the tenants in the two houses was 77 persons. Seventeen of them moved to other houses where some of their fellow villagers were living. Of the remaining 60 Keralites, six were members in the Cundore

Muslim Society. They communicated the problem to the Society which solved the problem within a few days. The Society rented two houses in the Powerhouse area to accommodate the 60 Keralites. The one year's rent (75,000 Derhams for both houses) was paid in advance by the Society and the tenants were to pay each month almost the same amount they used to pay before.

Other objectives for forming such societies were to help their members financially in an emergency such as that faced by Abdulrehman, and to help fellow villagers giving their daughters or sisters in marriage, by providing them with interest-free loans or donation, depending on their financial ability. I was told that the Society had helped more than fifty persons in various ways in one year. Moreover, the Society's help also extended back to the village community in Kerala. Cundore Muslim Society had helped financially in the building of two schools and one mosque, and at the time of the study it was involved in helping to build an Islamic Cultural Centre in Cundore⁽⁸⁾. This was to serve the Muslim community, not only in Cundore, but also in the neighbouring villages.

7. Relationship with Relatives in Kerala

All of the Keralites under study maintained intense relationships with their families and relatives back in Kerala. Intense relationships do not necessarily involve day-to-day or face-to-face interaction. Although the Keralites' day-to-day interaction with the rest of their

families and relatives were restricted to the few days when they visited Kerala on holidays, their relationships with their relatives back home remained very strong. Face-to-face contacts were substituted, if only temporarily, with contacts kept up through letters, telephone calls and brief visits.

The most common means used by all of the migrants to communicate with their families and relatives and vice-versa was the postal service. Almost 95 per cent of the migrants reported that they wrote to their families on a regular basis. A little more than 60 per cent (621 persons) reported that they wrote to their families at least once a month. About 23 per cent (236 persons) wrote every two weeks and almost 12 per cent (123 persons) claimed they sent letters every week. Fewer than 5 per cent (47 persons) admitted writing to their families on an irregular basis.

Most of the migrants sent their letters to their father or to the head of the household if other than the father (mother, eldest brother, eldest son, uncle, etc.) as the person looking after the migrant's wife and children. In the cases where the migrant was himself the head of the household, he wrote to his spouse and/or his eldest son or his closest relative (most often a brother). Unexpectedly, a relatively large proportion (about 7.6 per cent or 61 persons) of the married migrants reported that they did not write separate letters to their spouses. All of the migrants

reported that they received letters from their families and relatives, though not as often as they wrote.

Contact through the telephone was also used from time to time but only by less than 2 per cent or 19 persons, as few of the migrants' families had telephones in their houses. However, receiving telephone calls from families in Kerala was rather more frequent. The great majority of those interviewed (about 77 per cent) reported that they received telephone calls from their relatives once or twice a year. Telephoning from Kerala involved too much trouble. One had to go to the telephone office, which was usually situated in the centre of each municipality, and wait in a rather long queue for two hours or even longer before one could successfully contact the other party in Abu Dhabi. Moreover, telephone calls from Kerala to Abu Dhabi were rather expensive, costing about 120 Rupees per minute. Therefore, telephone was used mainly in cases of emergency.

Contact with relatives was also maintained through holiday visits to Kerala. As Table 8.1(a) indicates, almost 65 per cent (667 persons) of the Keralites under investigation reported that they visited Kerala on a regular basis. Those who visited Kerala every year, every two years and every three years formed 21, 29 and 14.9 per cent respectively. A little more than 12 per cent stated that they visited Kerala at irregular intervals. A relatively large proportion, more than one fifth (234 persons), claimed that they had never visited Kerala since their arrival to

the U.A.E.. These, however, were mainly migrants who had come to the U.A.E. after 1986 and up to the time of the study had not secured regularly paying jobs or had only recently been employed.

TABLE 8.1(a)
FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO KERALA

FREQUENCY OF VISITS	NUMBERS	%
EVERY YEAR	215	21.0
EVERY 2 YEARS	299	29.0
EVERY 3 YEARS	153	14.9
ON IRREGULAR BASIS	126	12.3
NO VISITS SINCE MIGRATION	234	22.8
TOTAL	1027	100

As the data in Table 8.1(b) indicate, visiting Kerala on holidays was affected to a great extent by the sector in which the migrants were employed. The great majority (56.5 per cent) of those working for the government reported that they visited Kerala every year, almost one third of them stated every two years and those who said they visited Kerala every three years or on irregular intervals formed very small proportion of about two and one per cent respectively. Turning to the private sector employees, a somewhat different picture was observed. They were less likely to visit Kerala every year. The largest proportion of

66 per cent stated they visited home every two or three years, and about 19 per cent on irregular basis. Little more than six per cent stated that they went to Kerala on holiday every year.

TABLE 8.1(b)
FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO KERALA
BY EMPLOYMENT SECTOR (%)

FREQUENCY OF VISITS	EMPLOYMENT SECTOR				TOTAL
	1	2	3	4	
EVERY YEAR	56.5	6.2	39.7	0.5	21.0
EVERY 2 YEARS	32.5	37.8	22.4	2.7	29.0
EVERY 3 YEARS	2.1	28.0	6.9	1.6	14.9
ON IRREGULAR BASIS	1.1	18.8	31.0	5.9	12.3
NO VISITS SINCE MIGRATION	7.8	9.2	—	89.2	22.8
TOTAL* %	100	100	100	100	100
n.	283	500	58	186	1027

1 = Government sector

2 = Private sector

3 = Self employed

4 = Unemployed and irregularly employed

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

The differences observed between the government and the private sector workers in this regard seem to be related to the employment conditions in these two sectors. While the government employees were given at least 28 days, holiday with pay every year, the great majority of those employed in the private sector were given one month holiday every couple of years. Moreover, as was discussed in a previous chapter

the government employees had steady employment and stable incomes, whereas those working in the private sector had insecure jobs and generally lower incomes

Although the self-employed seemed to have some control in terms of the timing and length of their holidays and how often they visited Kerala, about 40 per cent only reported that they had been visiting Kerala every year since the establishment of their business. A little more than 22 per cent said they visited home every two years and a relatively large proportion (31 per cent) went to Kerala at irregular intervals.

8. Summary

This chapter has dealt with the social relationships of the study group. It attempted to shed some light on the nature of the social relationship between my respondents and the local people and other immigrant groups, on the one hand, and their relationships with each other within the Keralite group, on the other. The chapter started with a brief discussion of two important concepts often used in the literature of migration, namely the concept of assimilation and that of accommodation. It was argued that while assimilation seems to be irrelevant in a multinational society such as that of the U.A.E., the concept of accommodation appears to be more appropriate for our analysis.

The findings of this study are not dissimilar from those observed in studies of Asian immigrants elsewhere

(Desai, 1963 and Jeffery, 1973). Keralites in Abu Dhabi did not participate in every sphere of the society's social life. Their participation was confined to the work sphere. The resulting relationships between them and other groups in Abu Dhabi were fleeting and single-stranded. Several factors may have helped to shape the relationship between the Keralites and other groups. First, the Keralites' culture differs significantly from those of the local people and other immigrant groups, including Indians from different linguistic-regional groups. Second, In Abu Dhabi, immigrants, (particularly single immigrants) are confined to certain residential areas and are prevented from joining local clubs and societies. Except for the children of Arab immigrants who are working for the government, immigrants' children are not allowed in the public schools. Thus, regardless of their ethnicity, nationality or race, single immigrants in Abu Dhabi, are not only confined to specific residential areas but they are also socially segregated. Third, the clustering of a large number of Keralite immigrants living in close-by houses coupled with nonexistence of any neighbourhood activities at a group level, made it natural for them to insulate themselves inside their cultural group and to maintain a minimum of contact with the local and other immigrant groups. Fourth, the negative and even hostile attitude which the local people and the Arab immigrants had developed towards the Asian immigrants, coupled with the institutionalized

discrimination against them, increased the social separation between the Keralites and other groups.

One major sphere in which the Keralites were more likely to make contact with other groups was the workplace. However, even here, it was observed that the relationship between the Keralites and other ethnic groups was kept to a minimum and hardly extended outside the workplace.

To cope with the insecure working and living environment in the host country, the Keralites depended heavily on their own networks. Keralites' social networks and the relationships within these networks were shaped and patterned by kinship, place of origin and religious affiliation. Three kinds of social networks were observed within the Keralite community under study. At one level, there were rather small networks based on kinship. The relationships in these networks were very dense and multiplex. Having a close relative in the host society was so important for intimate social relationship and mutual aid that those with no close relatives had to invoke and activate their distant kinship ties, which had been latent or unrealized before migration.

Nonetheless, the success of these kinship networks in providing much mutual help for its members depended on rather larger networks based on the villages from which they had come. In the case of Muslim Keralites, not only was the housing arrangement based on kinship and villages of origin, but all Keralites coming from the same village formed larger

networks by joining informal voluntary associations often named after their village of origin. These associations provided very important services, protection and security for their members. Their services also extended back to the village community in Kerala. No similar associations were found among the Hindus or the Christians.

Keralites from different villages or of different religions maintained some boundaries in relation to each other. These boundaries, however, allowed for some contact between them. They did not prevent them from helping each other in time of need, such as lodging a newcomer or helping a fellow Keralite to find work. The relationships which such reciprocal services entailed were transient and single-stranded and usually ended once the situation which initiated them ceased to exist.

Intense relationships do not necessarily involve face-to-face interaction. Keralites in the host country kept very strong relationships with their relatives back in Kerala and face-to-face interaction was replaced with contact through letters, telephone calls and short holiday visits to Kerala. This is quite natural, since the Keralites under study were single immigrants who considered their presence in the host country to be only temporary.

We now have a fairly detailed and multi-faceted picture of the life of the migrants in Abu Dhabi. The other side of the picture, of course, is the society they left behind, and to this we now turn.

NOTES

1. Until recently it was believed that the personnel forming U.A.E. army belonged to 65 different nationalities.
2. Minority, here, refers to a group of people that is socially, politically and economically subordinate irrespective of their numbers. As Wirth put it, "Although the size of the group may have some effect upon its status and upon its relationship to the dominant group, minorities are not to be judged in terms of numbers. The people whom we regard as a minority may actually, from a numerical standpoint, be a majority." (1973:50-51).
3. See for example Ali, 1983 and Al-Easa, 1983.
4. Generally speaking Asian immigrants have an inferior social status not only in the U.A.E. but in all of the Arab Gulf states. See for example Al-Najjar, 1983:247.
5. The term "network" was probably first introduced by Barnes, referring to the various ties and links of kinship, friendship and neighbourhood. He viewed the network as consisting of a set of points (representing people) joined by lines (representing the relationships) cited in Jeffery, 1976:117).
6. The mail service in Abu Dhabi has not yet been developed so as to deliver the mail to the houses.
7. There were no similar associations among the Hindus or the Christians. This may be due to the fact that the numbers of Hindus and Christians who came from one village or even two neighbouring villages was too small to allow the creation of such societies, and it may be that the nature of the Hindu caste system prevented the establishment of similar associations.
8. The Centre, I was told, was a very large project consisting of a college for Arabic and Islamic Studies, a Vocational Training Institute, a Boarding School, an Orphanage and some other facilities serving the Muslim community in Cundore and the neighboring villages.

CHAPTER NINE

IMPACTS OF MIGRATION

1. Introduction

Large flows of labour from a country are expected to produce a number of socio-economic effects in the country concerned. On the one hand, the remittances from the migrant workers form a gross addition to the national income. Large emigrations of labour, on the other hand, may result in corresponding social costs and output losses. However, the net effect will depend on many factors such as the size of the outflows of workers, their employment status at the time of migration, their skill composition, the possibility of their replacement from the unemployed stock and so forth⁽¹⁾.

One important impact of the large outflow of male migrants often neglected by studies of Indian labour migration to the Middle East is the social impact on the migrants' households. Most studies of Indian migrant labour have been conducted by economists who have been preoccupied with the analysis of labour outflows and remittances inflows⁽²⁾. Here an attempt will be made to shed light on the social effects of large-scale male migration with particular attention to the migrants' families

The chapter is divided into five parts. In the first part the importance of remittances to the sending countries in general is discussed very briefly. Some impacts of

migration on the economies of India and Kerala state are discussed in the second and the third parts. The fourth and fifth parts focus on economic and social effects on the migrants' households.

2. The Importance of Remittances to the Sending Countries

One of the major issues discussed in the literature on international migration of labour to the Middle East is the issue of remittances. Most studies of Asian migration to the "oil-rich States of the Gulf" have concerned themselves mainly with the inflow of remittances, their impact on foreign exchange earnings and balance of payment and how these remittances are utilized (United Nations, 1987; Kim, 1986; Government of Kerala, 1987; Siddiqui, 1986; Stahl, 1986). Such concern is quite understandable in view of the massive flow of remittances to the labour exporting countries. In 1980, for instance, the total remittances from overseas Asian migrants working in various countries in the Middle East amounted to more than seven billion US dollars (Abella, 1984:495).

There is no doubt that labour migration has become an important source of foreign exchange earnings for most Asian labour exporting countries, some of which depend heavily on the continuing flow of remittances from their overseas workers. Remittances from overseas workers formed an important foreign exchange resource for Thailand, and the Philippines. It has been estimated that in 1982 Thailand received about US \$456 million from its overseas workers and

in 1983 its remittances from the Middle East amounted to about US \$327 million, forming almost 11 per cent of Thailand's merchandise exports. In 1983, the Philippines received slightly less than one billion US dollar from its overseas workers; an amount equivalent to more than 21 per cent of the country's merchandise exports in the same year (Stahl, 1986:87; United Nations, 1987:62). Similarly, flows of remittances to Pakistan and Bangladesh from their overseas workers make the overseas employment sector one of the most important contributors to these countries' foreign exchange earnings. Their annual inflows of remittances exceeds the total value of their merchandise exports. In 1981/82, Pakistan's remittance receipts amounted to UN \$2,224 million, forming 120 per cent of its merchandise exports and financing more than 50 per cent of Pakistan's total import bill. In 1982/83 the figure reached \$2,886 million (United Nations, 1987:61-72). For Bangladesh, remittances from its overseas workers amounted to about 94 per cent of its export earnings in 1982/83 and paid about 27 per cent of total imports (Siddiqui, 1986:237; United Nations, 1987:72).

3. The Impact of Emigration on the Economy of India

3.1 Flows of Remittances to India and Their Sources

The only available data regarding flows of remittances to India are furnished by the Reserve Bank of India in its annual publication on currency and finance. Remittances from Indian overseas workers are recorded as "private transfers"

in the current account of the balance of payments (Nair, 1988:17). According to these statistics there is no doubt that inflows of foreign remittances to India have been rising at an unprecedented rate in recent years. Table 9.1 shows that remittances to India from its overseas workers have increased substantially from about 1.4 billion Rupees in 1970-71 to 28.4 billion Rupees in 1985-86⁽²⁾.

TABLE 9.1

**PRIVATE TRANSFER PAYMENTS IN INDIA'S BALANCE OF PAYMENTS
BY REGION FROM 1970-71 TO 1985-86
(in million Rupees at current prices)**

YEAR	TOTAL RECEIPTS	RECEIPTS FROM STERLING AREA*	STERLING AREA RECEIPTS AS % OF TOTAL
1970-71	1,364	372	27.3
1971-72	1,622	571	35.2
1972-73	1,653	458	27.7
1973-74	2,033	763	37.5
1974-75	2,799	1,108	39.6
1975-76	5,412	2,481	45.8
1976-77	7,457	3,452	46.3
1977-78	10,293	6,157	59.8
1978-79	10,593	6,075	57.3
1979-80	16,320	9,784	60.0
1980-81	22,688	15,286	67.4
1981-82	22,371	13,169	58.9
1982-83	25,410	14,961	58.9
1983-84	27,851	14,757	53.0
1984-85	31,162	15,297	49.1
1985-86	28,354	—	—

Sources: 1. Nair, 1988:18 (Table 5)

2. Nayyar, 1987:21 (Table 6)

* The Sterling Area includes all Gulf countries and the Commonwealth countries excluding Canada.

There was a sharp break in the trend of remittances from the Sterling Area beginning in the mid-seventies.

Before 1973-74 remittances from the Sterling Area had been fluctuating but starting in 1974-75 the proportion of remittances from the Sterling area began to increase rapidly both in absolute and relative terms and reached its peak in 1980-81. In this year the proportion of remittances from the Sterling Area stood at 15,286 million Rupees and accounted for 67.4 per cent of the total remittances. After 1980-81 this proportion began to decline to reach about 49 per cent of the total remittances in 1984-85. Given the fact that the flow of remittances coincided with large-scale migration to the oil-rich countries of the Middle East, it is reasonable to assume with other writers on this subject that the spectacular growth in India's inflow of remittances is attributable entirely to the inflow of remittances from Indians working in the Middle East, particularly the oil-surplus countries of the Gulf region (United Nation, 1987; Nair, 1986; Gulati and Mody, 1985 and Nayyar, 1982).

According to various studies of Indian overseas migrants there were in total about half million potential remitters to India in the late seventies, whereas in the Middle East there were slightly more than 150,000 potential remitters in 1975. Bearing in mind that Indian migrants to the developed countries went on a more or less permanent basis, their propensity to remit could be expected to be much lower than that of Indian migrants to the Middle East, who went there on a temporary basis. On the other hand, Indian migrants to the developed countries were better skilled and therefore enjoyed higher incomes, so that

possibly their remittances were higher than those of workers in the Middle East. Weighing all of these factors, it is estimated that in 1975 and earlier years the larger proportion of remittances to India came from the developed countries, with the Indian migrants in the Middle East contributing about one third only (United Nation, 1987:50-51; Nair, 1986:90-91 and Gulati and Mody, 1985:29-31).

Starting in 1975, however, almost all of the Indian migrants went to the Middle East oil-rich countries. The vast majority of them were workers unaccompanied by dependents. This resulted in a sharp decline of the dependency ratio in the Middle East countries compared to that in the developed countries. As a result, the share of remittances from Indian migrants in the Middle East rose at a linear rate from one third in 1974 and 1975 to about three quarters in 1980 (Gulati and Mody, 1985:29-31).

Other studies have identified other underlying factors which may help to explain why the non-Middle East remittances grew quickly up to the mid-1970s but much more slowly after 1975. First, In 1960 the rupee was overvalued and therefore a significant proportion of remittances from Indian expatriates arrived through illegal channels. In 1972, however, the rupee was allowed to float and hence, there was a steady depreciation in the exchange value of the rupee so that by the mid-seventies its overvaluation had almost disappeared. This eliminated the primary incentive for remittances through illegal channels and a large

proportion, if not all, of illegal remittances may have returned to the official channels. Remittances thus showed an increase from the developed countries during the first half of the seventies and stabilized thereafter (Nayyar, 1982:641-660).

Second, the international price of gold rose rapidly in the first half of the seventies so that its international price levelled with the Indian domestic price. At the same time the Indian government simplified banking procedures for remittances, created an extension of banking facilities overseas, liberalized the foreign exchange regulations for non-resident Indians and started to enforce laws against smuggling. All of the above combined to reduce further the incentive to remit illegally through smuggling of gold and other consumer durables, and enhanced the inflow of remittances through official channels. This helps further to account for the increase of the remittances from the developed countries during the first part of the seventies. By the end of the 1970s these factors lost their effect and the remittance flows started to resume their normal pattern as determined by the propensities of the remitters. The Middle East countries became the most important source of remittances to India (Nayyar, 1987:30).

3.2. Impact of Remittances on India's Balance of Payments

The impact of remittance inflows on the recipient country is probably best looked at in terms of its relation to other economic indicators. One of the most important

impacts is on the balance of payments. Table 9.2 shows that in relation to all of the five items of the balance of payments the relative importance of remittances inflows increased rapidly after 1975-76, reaching its highest level in 1980-81 and then stabilizing at a somewhat lower level.

TABLE 9.2

INDIA'S REMITTANCES AS PERCENTAGE OF SELECTED ITEMS
OF THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

YEAR	EXPORTS	IMPORTS	BALANCE OF TRADE	CURRENT ACCOUNT RECEIPTS	INTEREST ON LOANS PLUS AMORTIZATION
1970-71	5.7	4.7	25.3	4.2	18.5
1971-72	7.2	5.6	25.5	5.3	24.9
1972-73	5.5	4.8	41.5	4.3	20.6
1973-74	6.1	5.2	37.6	3.1	26.4
1974-75	6.9	5.3	22.5	5.4	45.3
1975-76	10.1	8.9	74.8	7.3	81.6
1976-77	12.1	12.9	197.2*	8.6	107.8
1977-78	16.9	16.6	873.3**	11.1	122.7
1978-79	17.0	12.8	51.2	10.8	128.9
1979-80	23.7	15.4	43.6	13.7	180.6
1980-81	31.5	17.0	35.7	17.1	220.2
1981-82	26.8	15.0	34.0	15.3	205.2
1982-83	26.6	16.3	42.2	16.0	183.1
1983-84	26.0	16.5	45.1	15.5	158.1
1984-85	24.9	16.0	44.4	14.7	134.5

Sources: Nayyar, 1987:57 (Table 14)

* In 1976-77 the balance of trade was in surplus

** In 1977-78 the deficit was very small, in relation to which the volume of remittances was rather large

In no single year of the first half of the 1970s did remittances exceed 6.9 per cent of exports and 5.6 per cent of imports. In 1980-81 the remittances came to represent about one third of exports, and they continued to form over one quarter of exports during the first half of the 1980s.

In relation to imports remittances were 17 per cent in 1980-81 and continued to represent about 16 per cent during the first half of the 1980s. As far as the balance of trade is concerned, remittances financed about 40 per cent of the huge balance of trade deficits during the first half of the 1980s. Moreover, compared to interest on foreign loans together with amortization, the remittances inflows were significantly greater all the way from 1976-77 to 1984-85. As a percentage of invisible receipts, remittances increased from 31 per cent in 1974-75 to almost 48 per cent in 1977-78 and subsequently declined to about 45 per cent in 1981-82 (United Nations, 1987:79-80 and Nayyar, 1987:56).

3.3. Impact of Emigration on Employment Situation and Output

The impact of emigration from India on employment and output at the national level seems to have been negligible for the following reasons. First, the outflows from India were very small compared to India's total work-force, to the increment in the work-force, and to the employed and the unemployed. Even at their peak in 1981-82 labour outflows from India formed merely 0.13 per cent of the total work-force and about 5 per cent only of those in employment. In the period 1980-83 the outflows of migrants continued their relatively high levels; however, this amounted to only a little over one per cent of the total employment in the organized sector of the economy and about 1.7 per cent of the unemployed (Nayyar, 1987:45). These proportions are likely to have been smaller after 1983, since the outflows

have been on the decline: so that by 1986 the outflows were almost half of those in 1983.

Second, there is no reliable information on the employment status of the Indian emigrants or their skill composition at the macro level. Nonetheless, one can draw some broad inferences about these issues from the information obtainable from various micro-level studies (mainly from Kerala and including the present study). According to these studies about one half of the migrants were unemployed before they left India (Gulati and Modi, 1985:44-46 and Nair, 1986b:73). As far as skill composition is concerned, almost all of the micro level studies point to the conclusion that the great majority of the migrants from India to the Middle East had less than secondary education and few, if any, skills (Nair, 1986a:21-24 and 1986b:73; Gulati and Modi, 1985:45-46; Gulati 1986:198-200 and Government of Kerala, 1987:18). One macro-level study, has estimated that as many as 40 per cent of all Indian emigrant workers who left India during the mid-1980s were unskilled workers. Those were more likely to have been drawn from the unemployed, landless, agricultural labourers, the under-employed members of peasant households and from unemployed or under-employed workers, particularly casual wage labourers in urban centres (Nayyar, 1987:66).

Third, the semi-skilled, skilled, and highly skilled workers and the highly qualified professionals, taken together, constituted less than 50 per cent of the total

out-migration. Assuming that a large proportion of them were employed at the time of migration they would have been readily replaceable from the available huge stock of surplus labour, which cut across the entire spectrum of skills. Unemployment in India is high, even among the highly-skilled and professionals (Nair, 1986b:76). Moreover, the employment opportunities available to highly qualified professionals are much fewer than the numbers of such manpower produced by the country's higher educational system (Nayyar, 1987:46).

From all of the above it would be reasonable, without going further into detailed economic analysis, to assume that the impact of the outflows of labour from India on output and employment situation, if any, would have been negligible⁽³⁾. Whether the argument outlined above remains valid when we look at the impact of emigration from a regional point of view is another matter. We will return to this point when we discuss the economic impact of emigration on Kerala state.

4. The Impact of Emigration on Kerala State

Within a labour-exporting country the economies of the regions which experience a large outflow of labour are more affected by remittance inflows than those which experience a small outflow of labour. Thus the direct impact of remittances inflows on the economies of such regions are likely to be more pronounced. Since the State of Kerala has the largest outflow of labour (estimated at 50 per cent of all Indian emigration) it is reasonable to assume that

remittances inflow has affected the local economy of Kerala more than that of any other state, and that Kerala has benefited the most from the inflow of remittances.

4.1 Flows of remittances to Kerala

The magnitude of remittances to Kerala from Keralites working abroad is very difficult to assess as there is no reliable source of information on the annual remittances received in the state. This is not only because a large proportion of the remittances is channelled through illegal channels but also because a large proportion of the Keralite overseas workers are known to make remittances to other places in India such as Bombay and Bangalore (Nair, 1988:19). Nonetheless, one can obtain a general idea about the volume of the annual remittances to Kerala from scattered bits and pieces in various studies on emigrant labour from Kerala. According to some Keralite economists the annual remittances to Kerala have increased from 1.5 billion Rupees or about 19 per cent of India's total remittances in 1976-77 to more than 7 billion or about 32 per cent of India's total remittances in 1981-82 (Gulati and Modi, 1983:31-35). Another study estimated the annual remittances to Kerala from Keralites working in the Gulf countries during the period between 1973 and 1986 at about 6 billion Rupees and if illegal transfers in currency and in the form of gold, equipment and goods were taken into account then the annual amount remitted to Kerala would be of the order of about 8 billion Rupees (Nair, 1988:19-20).

TABLE 9.3

**REMITTANCES TO KERALA FROM THE MIDDLE EAST
AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE DOMESTIC STATE INCOME
BETWEEN 1976-77 AND 1984-85
(Million Rupees at current prices)**

YEAR	ESTIMATED RANGE OF REMITTANCES	NET DOMESTIC PRODUCT AT FACTOR COST (current prices)	REMITTANCES AS PROPORTION OF STATE DOMESTIC PRODUCT (%)
1976-77	1381-1726	23,280	5.9 - 7.4
1977-78	2463-3079	24,630	10.0 - 12.5
1978-79	2430-3038	26,900	9.0 - 11.3
1979-80	3913-4892	30,350	12.9 - 16.1
1980-81	6114-7643	34,989	17.5 - 21.8
1981-82	5268-6585	37,047	14.2 - 17.8
1982-83	5984-7481	44,217	13.5 - 16.9
1983-84	5902-7379	52,034	11.3 - 14.2
1984-85	6119-7649	59,653	10.3 - 12.8

Sources: Kerala's remittances are estimated from Table 9.1 on the assumption that Kerala's share is between 40 and 50 per cent of the remittances received by India from the Middle East. The State domestic product is from Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Economic Review, 1985:86.

Let us assume that remittances from the Middle East to Kerala State formed between 40 and 50 per cent of the total remittances received by India from the Middle East (Gulati and Modi, 1983; United Nations, 1987 and Nair, 1986b). On the basis of this assumption remittances to Kerala can be estimated for the period from 1976-77 to 1984-85. As can be seen from Table 9.3, the annual remittances to Kerala are estimated to have increased nearly four and a half times in current prices⁽⁴⁾ between 1976-77 and 1980-81 after which they levelled off, falling to a somewhat lower level up to 1983-84, then starting to increase again in 1984-85, the

latest year for which data on remittances are available from this source.

4.2 Impact of Remittances on Kerala's Economy

As Table 9.3 shows, the effect of remittances on Kerala's domestic product seems to have been significant. Remittances formed a growing proportion of the state domestic product during the period between 1976-77 and 1980-81. With estimated value ranging between 6114 to 7643 million Rupees in 1980-81, remittances accounted for something between 17.5 to 21.3 per cent of the State domestic product. After 1980-81 this proportion started to decline, reaching in 1984-85 almost the same level as in 1977-78.

It is to be expected that remittances are distributed among the State's districts according their participation in the emigration outflows. The data in Table 9.4 seem to confirm this expectation. In 1979-80, the proportion of remittances received by the districts of Trichur, Malappuram, Cannanore and Trivandrum - all of which have experienced extensive emigration outflows⁽⁵⁾ - seem to have been much larger than the shares received by districts like Idukki, Ernakulam and Kottayam, which have not participated heavily in the emigration outflow from Kerala. The distribution of remittances across the districts becomes more interesting when it is looked at as a proportion of the districts' domestic products. Thus in 1979-80, remittances formed a little more than half and more than two fifth of

the domestic products in the districts of Malappuram and Trichur respectively.

TABLE 9.4

DISTRICT-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF STATE DOMESTIC PRODUCT
AND FOREIGN REMITTANCES IN KERALA IN 1979-80
(Million Rupees)

DISTRICT	(1) DISTRICT'S DOMESTIC PRODUCT	(2) DISTRICT'S SHARE OF REMITTANCES	(2) AS PERCENTAGE OF (1)
TRICHUR	255	107	42.0
MALAPPURAM	191	99	51.8
CANNANORE	323	70	21.7
TRIVANDRUM	282	60	21.3
QUILON	329	53	16.1
KOZHIKODE	302	49	16.2
ALLEPPY	243	48	19.7
PALGHAT	218	20	9.2
KOTTAYAM	218	12	5.5
ERNAKULAM	378	11	2.9
IDUKKI	135	0.8	0.6

Source: Adapted from United Nations, 1987, (Table 38),
p. 82.

The flow of remittances to these districts, however, does not seem to have done a great deal to improve the real per capita domestic products of these districts. As Table 9.5 shows the real domestic product for Malappuram district declined by about six per cent between the period 1970-71 to 1980-81. In Cannanore district it remained almost the same and in Trichur district it increased by less than three per cent only. Thus the districts of Trichur, Malappuram and Cannanore which in 1970-71 had the lowest domestic product continued to be the three poorest districts in the State of

Kerala⁽⁶⁾. Nonetheless, having coincided with a period of near stagnation in the economy of the State, the large scale inflow of remittances from the Keralites working in the Gulf countries must have played a significant role in the economy

TABLE 9.5
PER CAPITA DOMESTIC PRODUCT OF DISTRICTS
IN KERALA IN 1970-71 AND 1979-80
(In Rupees at 1970-71 prices)

DISTRICT	(1) 1970-71		(2) 1980-81		(2) AS PROPORTION OF (1)
	AMOUNT	RANK	AMOUNT	RANK	
TRICHUR	531.58	9	545.34	9	102.6
MALAPPURAM	429.15	11	402.96	11	93.9
CANNANORE	521.91	10	525.83	10	100.7
TRIVANDRUM	558.97	7	593.82	5	106.2
QUILON	630.45	3	584.70	7	98.7
KOZHIKODE	586.88	5	636.81	3	108.5
ALLEPPY	562.49	6	588.92	6	104.7
PALGHAT	548.43	8	569.90	8	103.9
KOTTAYAM	636.02	2	666.19	2	104.7
ERNAKULAM	647.43	1	800.24	1	123.6
IDUKKI	599.73	4	598.73	4	99.8
STATE	567.18		589.80		104.0

Source: Adapted from United Nations, 1987, (Table 39), p. 83.

of the State as a whole and particularly of the poorest districts. Had it not been for the large remittances from the Keralites working in the oil-rich countries of the Gulf, Kerala would have registered a negative growth rate in the economy during the period between 1975-76 to 1984-85. According to the Government of Kerala:

Even the marginal increase in the net domestic product is made possible because of the growth in the construction and tertiary sectors consequent on Gulf remittances. It is only the manpower export to Gulf countries and the large remittances which helped the State to prevent a negative growth rate in the economy during the last decade (1987:28).

TABLE 9.6

PER CAPITA INCOME (DOMESTIC PRODUCT PLUS REMITTANCES)
OF DISTRICTS IN KERALA, 1980-81 (Rupees)

DISTRICT	(1) PER CAPITA DOMESTIC PRODUCT CURRENT PRICES 1980-81		(2) PER CAPITA REMITTANCES 1980-81		PER CAPITA INCOME (1)+(2)	
	AMOUNT	RANK	AMOUNT	RANK	AMOUNT	RANK
TRICHUR	1,185	10	655	1	1,840	1
MALAPPURAM	876	11	601	2	1,477	10
CANNANORE	1,260	6	388	3	1,646	4
TRIVANDRUM	1,252	8	348	5	1,600	8
QUILON	1,323	5	305	7	1,628	5
KOZHIKODE	1,488	3	313	6	1,801	3
ALLEPPY	1,252	7	360	4	1,612	6
PALGHAT	1,214	9	149	9	1,363	11
KOTTAYAM	1,440	4	166	8	1,606	7
ERNAKULAM	1,744	1	80	10	1,824	2
IDUKKI	1,517	2	24	11	1,541	9

Source: Adapted from United Nations, 1987, (Table 40), p. 83.

Moreover, as Table 9.6 indicates, it is reasonable to argue that the benefit of the remittances inflow from the Keralite workers abroad was distributed across the districts in such a way as to favour those districts with low levels of domestic product and low rates of growth, so that it reduced the inter-regional disparities in the income distribution. Thus, when the remittances are added to per capita domestic product, the relatively backward districts

seemed to move up in the per capita income ranking. Moreover, by comparing the dispersion⁽⁷⁾ of the district-wise per capita domestic product with that of the district-wise per capita income, i.e. domestic product plus remittance receipts, a levelling up in the distribution of income in Kerala is observed (United Nations, 1987:83-82 and Government of Kerala, 1987:28-28).

The effect of the remittances inflow has been felt most in the construction activities and in the tertiary sector of the economy such as transport, trade, hotels, restaurants, banking and real estates. The contribution of the tertiary sector to the State net domestic product has increased from about 30 per cent in 1970-71 to about 43 per cent in 1984-85. The relative size of contribution of the tertiary sector in districts which experienced extensive emigration was larger (45 to 50 per cent) than in the rest of the districts (24 to 43 per cent)⁽⁸⁾.

4.3 Emigration and the Labour Market Situation in Kerala

Kerala is one of the smallest states of India, accounting for little more than one per cent of India's total territory and 3.7 per cent of its population. At the same time Kerala accounts for the largest proportion of the total outflow of workers from India (not less than 50 per cent). One would expect that such level of emigration would have had a significant effect on the state's labour market situation. However, this does not seem to have been the case.

We have already mentioned that Kerala has the lowest labour participation rate among all the states in India and that it has been dominated by persistent unemployment for many decades. In a labour market situation such as this emigration would have, if any, very little impact on the overall labour market situation in the state. Although there are no reliable data on the employment status of the Keralite migrants before their departure, one may obtain a general idea of their characteristics from various micro level studies. From the results observed in this study and other village-level studies, it is reasonable to infer that more than fifty per cent of the Keralite migrants were, on the eve of migration, young, unmarried, with secondary level of education or below, with little or no skill and unemployed. As for those who were employed on the eve of migration, they could readily have been replaced from the reservoir of surplus labour in Kerala, which is enormous and spans the entire spectrum of skills.

Kerala's labour market remained insensitive not only to the huge out-migration but also to the returned migrants whose numbers have been increasing during the last few years⁽⁹⁾. According to one study conducted in Kerala on 696 returned migrants, only 13.8 per cent sought paid employment in the organized sectors. About 60 per cent of them remained unemployed, either because they were without any educational qualifications, or over aged, or because they were planning to go back to the Gulf countries. About one quarter of the sample were self-employed (Nair, 1986:137 and 1988:37).

Talking to some 53 Keralites who had returned home after working for several years in the Gulf countries, during the field work in Kerala, the researcher found that 49 persons were planning to go back to the Gulf and were ready to pay as much as 30,000 Rupees for an opportunity to re-migrate. The other four persons had established their own businesses.

According to some studies the effect of the huge withdrawal of skilled and semi-skilled workers from Kerala's labour market was felt in the construction sector of the economy. This was reflected in the wages of some categories of workers such as skilled masons and carpenters which increased at rates higher than those of others (Nair, 1986b:78 and 1988:37-40). Extensive emigration of skilled and semi-skilled construction workers was coupled with the increase in construction activities during the "housing boom" which took place between 1978 and 1984 generated by the utilization of remittances received by the migrants' households and by the housing loans policies adopted by various public and private agencies. This resulted in the supply of skilled construction workers lagging behind the demand for them (Nair, 1986b: 78-79 and 1988:37-39).

5. Impact of Migration on the Migrants' Households

5.1. Economic Impact

Macro and micro-level studies conducted on returned migrants in Kerala have shown that the living standards of the remittance-receiving households have improved

significantly. One macro-level study conducted by the Department of Economics and Statistics covering all the 14 districts of the State found that the physical assets⁽¹⁰⁾ of the remittance-receiving households had increased significantly so that their position in the ownership of various physical assets was much better than that of households receiving no remittances. The average size of the land owned by them increased by about 30 per cent so that the average area of land owned by these household was 0.47 hectares compared to 0.27 hectares in the case of the households receiving no remittances. The average value of buildings (residential and non-residential) owned by the remittance-receiving households rose by about 13 per cent. Thus, at the time of the study, the average value of buildings was 63,200 Rupees for the migrants' households and 41,800 Rupees for other households. As far as gold ornaments and jewellery were concerned, the former households owned three time as much as the latter households. The study collected information on livestock, electrical appliances and other durable consumer items, and considering each item the study found that the position of the remittance-receiving households was far better than that of the households receiving no remittances (Government of Kerala, 1987:25).

Somewhat similar findings have been reported by village-level studies (Prakash, 1978 and Nair, 1986a). According to Prakash, the consumption level of the migrants' households was found to be higher than that of non-migrants

and that the former households possessed more electrical instruments and consumer durables than the latter households. Moreover, about one third of the remittance-receiving households had built new homes and about one fifth had repaired and reconstructed their homes (Prakash, 1978:1107-1111). The findings of this study seem to confirm the macro findings.

TABLE 9.7(a)

CHANGES IN THE MIGRANTS' HOUSEHOLDS LIVING STANDARDS AS REPORTED BY THE MIGRANTS

LIVING STANDARDS	NUMBERS	%
Much higher than before migration	178	17.3
Higher than before migration	454	44.2
Same as before migration	269	26.2
Lower than before migration	126	12.3
TOTAL	1027	100

5.1.1 Better Living Standards

As Table 9.7(a) shows the great majority (61.5 per cent) of the migrants under study reported that the living standards of their families back in Kerala had improved since they first migrated and a little more than 17 per cent said they were much better than before migration. A rather

large proportion, a little over one fourth of the migrants, believed that the living standards of their households had not changed and yet another 12.3 per cent claimed that they had become even worse than before migration.

It was observed, however, that a positive relationship did exist between the migrants' households' living standards and the number of years in the host country so that the longer the length of time spent in the U.A.E., the more likely that the living standards of the migrants' families had improved. As the data in Table 9.7(b) indicate, only 2.3

TABLE 9.7(b)

**CHANGES IN THE MIGRANTS' HOUSEHOLDS' LIVING STANDARDS
AS REPORTED BY THE MIGRANTS BY NUMBER OF YEARS IN THE
U.A.E. (%)**

LIVING STANDARDS	NUMBER OF YEARS IN THE U.A.E.			
	less than 5 years	5 to 10 years	11 to 15 years	16 years or more
Much higher than before migration	2.3	17.7	42.9	74.1
Higher than before migration	33.9	61.3	47.4	25.9
Same as before migration	40.6	17.0	9.7	—
Lower than before migration	23.2	4.0	—	—
TOTAL	100	100	100	100
% n.	487	328	154	58

per cent of the migrants who had been in the U.A.E. for less than five years reported that their families back in Kerala

had much higher living standards than before migration. This proportion increased as the number of years in the U.A.E. increased to reach about 74 per cent of the migrants who had been working in the U.A.E. for 16 years or more. Those who believed that the living standards of their households had not changed formed about 41 per cent of the Keralites who had been in the U.A.E. for less than 5 years, 17 per cent of those in the 5 to 10 years category and less than 10 per cent of those in the 11 to 15 years category. As for the Keralites who believed that the standards of living of their families had declined, they formed nearly one fourth of those in the less than five years category but about 4 per cent of those in the 5 to 10 years category, and were not represented at all among those who had stayed longer.

5.1.2 Better Housing Conditions

One important indication of the better living standards of the migrants' households back in Kerala was improved housing conditions. It seems that a large proportion of the remittances received by the migrants' households was spent on house construction and repairs. As Table 9.8 shows, more than one half of the migrants under study reported that their households lived in better housing conditions than before they first migrated. Almost 18 per cent said that they had constructed new houses, about 20 per cent reported that they had renewed their houses or built additional facilities (additional rooms, kitchen, bathrooms, independent latrine facilities, stores, etc.) and about 19

per cent said they had just made some repairs to their old houses. Those who reported that no change had taken place to their households' housing conditions formed a rather large proportion of more than 43 per cent. These, however were mainly migrants who had been working in the U.A.E. for less than five years.

TABLE 9.8
REPORTED CHANGES IN THE HOUSING CONDITIONS OF THE
MIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS AT THE TIME OF THE STUDY (%)

HOUSING CONDITION AFTER MIGRATION	NUMBER OF YEARS IN THE U.A.E.				TOTAL
	less than 5 years	5 to 10 years	11 to 15 years	16 years or more	
No change	70.6	30.8			43.3
Repaired the old house	17.9	28.3	8.4		18.8
Repaired the old house & built more facilities	11.5	24.7	39.6	12.1	20.0
Built new house		16.2	51.9	87.9	17.9
TOTAL* % n.	100 487	100 328	100 154	100 58	100 1027

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding

More detailed information regarding the housing conditions in Kerala was collected when the researcher visited some of the migrants' families. Unfortunately, the researcher was able to visit twenty households only. Nonetheless, the information obtained can be used together with the above information to give some idea about the

housing conditions of the migrants' households after migration.

Eleven of the twenty migrants' households were living in new houses which had been built a few years after the migration of one or more of their members. These houses varied in style, size and the quality of the materials used for roofing, walls, flooring, etc.. Three of the eleven houses were two-storey detached houses and the other eight were bungalow-type houses. Seven of the other nine households had repaired their old houses and built one or two additional rooms and other facilities. Only two of the twenty families had not introduced any changes to their old houses but they were planning to do so in one or two years' time. All of the twenty households had electricity connected to their homes and had drinking water facilities. Comparing the housing conditions of these twenty households before and after the migration of one or two of their members shows the level of change in the living standards of the twenty migrant households.

One of the households visited by the researcher was that of Abbas, whom we first met in Chapter 4 and who, before coming to Abu Dhabi with the help of his brother-in-law, was working in a restaurant with his elder brother Kabeer in the State of Madras. Abbas's extended family was living in a four-room house in the village of Chavakkad in Trichur District. The house walls were made of unburnt country-made bricks⁽¹¹⁾, the roof was made of tiles⁽¹²⁾ and

the floor was made of cement concrete⁽¹³⁾. Two of the rooms were about 10 by 10 feet each and the other two were 8 by 10 feet each. The kitchen, which was located at the back of the house was relatively large; about 10 by 15 feet. The bathroom was about 6 by 5 feet, also at the back of the house facing the kitchen. The bathroom was used as a bathing facility only. A separate latrine facility was built at the back of the house adjacent to the bathroom. The four rooms faced a rather long hall, about 8 feet by 20, which was used as a living room. Alongside the front of the house there was a platform where Kabeer's children could play, and where, in the evening, all of the family could sit down and have tea.

There were nine persons living in the house at the time of my visit. Abbas's parents occupied one room. His elder brother Kabeer, Kabeer's wife and their youngest child - a two year-old boy - occupied the second room. Kabeer was in Madras where he was working at the time of my visit. Kabeer's other two children - a three and a half year-old girl and five year-old boy - sometimes slept with their grandparents and sometimes with their aunt, Abbas's youngest sister, who was 16 years. She had left school after completing ten years of schooling. She used to share one of the other two rooms with her two sisters but after her two sisters got married she had the room to herself. The fourth room was occupied by Azeez, Abbas youngest brother who was 18 years old and about to go to college to study engineering. Abbas's parents seemed to be very happy to have

succeeded in sending him to Abu Dhabi. Abbas's father explained:

Abbas has been of great help to us all. My eldest son, Kabeer, was planning to build an additional room in the house for his wife and children but at the same time arrangements had been made to give in marriage my third daughter. My first and second daughters had taken with them as a dowry a large part of my coconut land; 20 cents each⁽¹⁴⁾. This time we decided to offer some 20,000 Rupees and 100 grammes of gold in the form of jewellery. Since we were short of cash I asked Kabeer to postpone the building of the room for some time at least until Abbas sent us enough money to build it.

Four months after his departure, Abbas started to send us about 1,200 Rupees every month for about a year and then he began to send about 3,500 Rupees on average every month. Eighteen months after Abbas had gone to the Gulf we had built Kabeer's room, and six months later we managed to change the thatched roof and replace it with a tiled one and made the platform on the front of the house. My fourth daughter got married soon after we had finished with the building. You see now there is a place for everybody and when my youngest daughter gets married Kabeer can use two rooms. We will build a two bedroom house for Abbas as soon as he visits us next time. It is about time for him to get married.

Another household I visited in Kerala was that of Hassan, whom we also met in Chapter 4. On the eve of migration Hassan, his wife Salma and his two little girls were living in his parents' house. There were five rooms in the house. Two were relatively large, about 15 by 12 feet each, and the other three were smaller, about 10 by 10 feet each. At the back of the house there was a large kitchen and a bathroom. A few yards from the house but within the house compound there were independent latrine facilities⁽¹⁵⁾.

Hassan, his wife and their children were occupying one of the two large rooms and Husain, Hassan's elder brother, his wife and his three children were living in the other large room. Hassan's parents were living in one of the small rooms. Hassan's two sisters shared the third room and his two youngest brothers shared the fifth room.

When I visited Hassan's parents' house, Hassan's two sisters had already married and left the house to live with their husbands. His two youngest brothers had finished high school and had gone to work in the U.A.E. with the help of Hassan. Hassan's father died in 1984 and Husain, being the eldest male in the household, assumed his responsibilities as the head of the household.

Husain acted as my host during the five days I spent in the village. I used the room which, had formerly been occupied by Hassan and his wife. He introduced me to Salma - Hassan's wife - and his children. Hassan now has five children, two girls and three boys. One of the girls was married and the second was engaged to a relative working in Saudi Arabia. The next day Husain and Salma took me to see the house which Hassan had built just a few yards from the old house. The house was beautiful, situated on a 10 cent piece of land and was built out of factory-made burnt bricks. The roof was made of reinforced concrete and the floor was about one metre above the ground level made of mosaic concrete. There were three bedrooms in the house, one of which was the main bedroom - 16 by 12 feet with a

bathroom attached to it. The other two bedrooms were smaller, about 12 by 12 feet each. A second bathroom was located between the two rooms for common use. In addition, there were a large living room, a storeroom and a large kitchen. The house was modestly furnished. "We are going to buy more furniture in the future," Salma commented. There were a few electrical appliances in the house; a mixer, an iron, a standing fan and a radio-cassette recorder. For Hassan and his nuclear family the house represented a major change for the better compared to the one room in Hassan's parents' house.

Almost all of the new and modern houses in the few villages I visited belonged to households some of whose members had been working in the Gulf countries. This is not to say that all the Keralites working in the Gulf area were living in new and modern houses. Indeed some of them were still living in the same houses as before migration. Nonetheless, from the information obtained in this study and from my observations in the three villages I visited, it seems that the great majority of the Keralites who were working or had worked in the Gulf countries for some time had considerably improved the housing conditions of their households.

5.1.3 Consumption Levels in the Migrants' Households

Consumption levels can be seen as another indicator of the living standards of the migrants' households back home. It is reasonable to assume that remittance flows to the

migrant's family must have some effect on the consumption level of the migrants' households in Kerala. Unfortunately we have little information on this issue. As Table 9.9 shows the monthly amount of money spent on food, electricity, water and other miscellaneous items such as medicine, children's education, etc., has increased in nineteen of the

TABLE 9.9
DISTRIBUTION OF VISITED HOUSEHOLDS BY MONTHLY CONSUMPTION LEVELS PRIOR TO AND AFTER MIGRATION

MONTHLY CONSUMPTION LEVEL AFTER MIGRATION	MONTHLY CONSUMPTION LEVEL PRIOR TO MIGRATION (in Rupees)					
	250 or Lees	251 to 500	501 to 750	751 to 1,000	Over 1,000	Total N. %
250 or less	—	—	—	—	—	— —
251 to 500	1	—	—	—	—	1 5.0
501 to 750	2	2	1	—	—	5 25.0
751 to 1,000	1	1	4	1	—	7 35.0
Over 1,000	—	—	3	1	3	7 35.0
Total N.	4	3	8	2	3	20
%	20.0	15.0	40.0	10.0	15.0	100

twenty households. One household only remained at the same consumption level as before migration. The monthly consumption level of three quarters of the households was 750 Rupees or less prior to migration. This proportion decreased to 30 per cent only at the time of the study, as nine households moved to higher levels of consumption. The

proportion of households whose consumption level was 751 Rupees or more had increased sharply from just one quarter of the total households prior to migration to slightly less than three quarters⁽¹⁶⁾.

5.1.4 Other Indications

Thirteen of the twenty households increased their possession of livestock after migration and five of the other seven households which prior to migration did not possess any livestock had bought some after migration. Moreover, some of the households (four) possessed quite a few livestock of various kinds (cows, goats, chickens, etc.) not only for their own consumption, but also to sell large quantities of their products (milk, eggs, etc.) to other households and coffee shops in the village and neighbouring villages, thus supplementing the household's income.

Although the furniture in most of the twenty houses was very modest, all of them had some electrical appliances which had been bought after migration or brought from the U.A.E.. All of the households, for example, possessed a mixer or grinder and seventeen households had an electric iron (see also Table 9.10).

Most of the households had invested some of the remittances in buying gold ornaments and jewellery. Eleven households had increased their possessions of these items. The value of the gold ornaments and jewellery reported as owned by these households varied from 20,000 to 100,000

Rupees. "You don't lose in gold, its value increases every day and when you want some cash it is easy to sell or mortgage", Salma said.

TABLE 9.10
ELECTRICAL AND OTHER APPLIANCES
OWNED BY HOUSEHOLDS

INSTRUMENT	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS
REFRIGERATOR	3
WASHING MACHINE	1
SEWING MACHINE	2
ELECTRIC OVEN	8
MIXER/GRINDER	20
ELECTRIC IRON	17
RADIO/TAPE RECORDER	20
TELEVISION	6
VCR	2
FAN	18
CAMERA	5

5.2. Social Impact

5.2.1 Migration and Family Interdependence

It seems that migration has the effect in Kerala of reinforcing the relationship between family members and increasing interdependence within family networks. As discussed in previous chapters, the migrants under study depended a good deal on their family members and their kinship networks in various ways. We have already discussed this point in detail in Chapter 4 and 7 and need not repeat it here. It is sufficient to emphasise at this point that in

the majority of cases under investigation, members of migrants' households had had to pool their resources in order to finance the migration. In some cases, where the cost of migration was beyond the household's ability, the family turned to other relatives for financial help. Once he was in the host country, a migrant was then expected to look for work opportunities for his relatives and do his best to provide them with the necessary documents at the actual cost and so on. Such reciprocal help and family interdependence must have had its positive effects on the relationship both among household members on the one hand and between them and other relatives on the other.

Moreover, the need for family networks becomes very important even after the migrant has left Kerala. Family interdependence is particularly important and necessary for those who on the eve of migration were married and had young children. Someone must take care of them in the absence of the husband. Thus all of the migrants who were married had entrusted their wives and children to the care of their parents or the wife's parents or other close relatives. Hassan, for instance, left his wife and children in the care of his parents when he first went to Abu Dhabi. Even when his house was built and his wife and his children had moved to live in it, they were still looked after by his parents, and when Hassan's father died his elder brother took care of them. Hassan's wife was able to handle the day-to-day household responsibilities and manage the daily budget of the household but she was unable, without the help of

Hassan's father and later Hassan's brother, to take care of other things such as building the house, repayment of debts or managing of funds remitted by Hassan and so on.

Even the unmarried migrants depended on their households, not only to manage whatever funds they might remit home but also to look for suitable girls to be their brides when they decided to marry. As mentioned in Chapter 3, about 58 per cent (595 persons) of the migrants under study were unmarried when they first migrated. About 66 per cent (392 persons) of them married a few years later, during a short visit to Kerala. Almost all of these marriages were arranged by the migrant's family in the absence of the migrant. Certainly such dependence on household members and other relatives in the sending community and the host country, both before and after migration, must have had a major role in strengthening the relationship between the family and household members, and in reinforcing their kinship networks.

5.2.2 Households Management and Joint-Living Arrangement

As mentioned in Chapter 3, on the eve of migration, the great majority (a little more than 84 per cent) of the migrants under study were either dependents or income earning members of their households. These migrants, including the married among them, did not have to make special arrangements before their departure. For these migrants, the responsibility of managing the affairs of the households remained, as it had been before migration, in the

hands of whoever been the head of the household, such as the father or the elder brother or, in few cases, the mother. Where the migrant was the head of household a temporary transfer of household management to another person had to be made. For more than 50 per cent of the 160 migrants who prior to migration were heads of households, household affairs were left to be managed by the wives. In most of these cases, however, the wife was assisted by a close male relative. In about one third of the cases (53 persons) the management of household affairs was taken by an immediate relative of the husband, and in about 16 per cent (26 persons) an immediate relative of the wife took care of the household affairs.

In the cases where the migrant, prior to migration, was living with his wife and dependent children in a separate house, a joint living arrangement often had to be made, so that when the husband left, they would be looked after. In most cases the wife and the dependent children moved to live with the migrant's or the wife's parents and in some cases where it was inconvenient for the wife and the children to move, the parents or an immediate relative moved in to live with the wife. An example of such an arrangement was the case of Nooruldeen, whom we first met in Chapter 4 as the migrant whose entrance to Abu Dhabi was arranged by his brother Ezuldeen. Nooruldeen was living with his wife and his four children in a separate house near his wife's parents house. When his brother sent him the visa to join him in the U.A.E. his wife's father moved to live with her

and her mother stayed in her own house with her youngest son and his wife. Another example was the case of Sham, the Hindu plumber whom we first met in Chapter 5. Sham's wife, Mandhana - 27 years old and the mother of four children - commented on the issue of joint living as follows:

We used to live in Sham's village near his parents. During the first two years of our marriage Sham was making a good living from his job as a plumber, but later the situation altered and Sham's income became insufficient to keep the household going, so Sham decided to try his luck in the Gulf countries. ... I suggested to him that we came and lived here with my parents where I, too, could work as a prawn peeler. As you know, Neendkara is a fishing village and almost all the people in the village live on fishing. Three months after we moved to my parents house, I had my second child and nine months later Sham left to Abu Dhabi. Three months after his departure Sham started sending money to me... Eighteen months later my younger sister also came to live with us with her child, as her husband, too, left to work in Bahrain.

As for those who married a few years after their migration, they left their young brides just a few weeks after marriage to live either with their parents or with the wife's parents, but more often with the former. Of the 392 migrants who married after migration, about 80 per cent (310 migrants) left their wives in the care of their parents. This is not to say, however, that once joint living arrangements had been made they never altered. Joint living arrangements may change over time. I have come across a few cases where a migrant's wife lived with her husband's parents but later moved to her parents' house, or where the wife stayed on the eve of migration at the house of either

set of parents and after a few years moved with her children to live in a newly built house of her own.

The above findings are not dissimilar from what has been found in other studies. Joint living arrangements seem to be the rule among migrants' households, rather than the exception. In her study of the fisherwomen in three villages on the Kerala coast, Gulati found that joint living arrangements were adopted even among the working women's households after the departure of the men to work in the Gulf countries (Gulati, 1984:70 and 83). In another study by the same researcher, it was found that out of the 33 migrants' wives studied 28 wives had arrangements made for them to live with some close relatives and only five did not share the house with any other relative. These five wives, however, were in the age-group of 30 to 40 and were living within easy walking distance of a close relative (Gulati, 1987:42).

5.2.3 Increased Responsibilities for the Women

Insufficient time was available for a thorough investigation the issue of the women's increasing responsibilities during the researcher's visits to migrants' households in Kerala. However, my own observations on this issue, when added to other studies' findings, do provide some insight into the topic. Various village-level studies conducted in Kerala have indicated that in villages of high migration almost one third of the total number of migrant households were left with no working males (Prakash, 1978).

The large-scale male migration is reflected in the sex ratios in villages of high migration being skewed in favour of women. One village-level study has shown that in villages of high migration the sex ratio was 145 women per 100 men compared to 103 women for 100 men for Kerala State (Mathew and Nair, 1978).

It seems that households which succeed in sending one of their members to work in the Gulf countries usually go on to send additional members, thus depleting the household of its male members (see Plates 14 and 15). As was shown in Chapter 3, the majority (almost 58 per cent) of the migrants reported that on the eve of their migration, at least one of their household members was working in the Gulf area and about 12 per cent had more than one member working in that region. In circumstances such as these, many households are left with no adult male members, or with old, retired males, thus increasing the responsibilities of the women. Moreover, the longer the husband remains abroad, the more and more the wives learn to manage their lives on their own and take decisions independent of any relatives, particularly if the wife and her children are living in a separate house with no close male relative.

For one example, Mathew's wife, Rita, was a mother of two children; a seven year-old boy and a three year-old girl. She worked as a nurse, and lived with her husband in his parents' house. Two days before Mathew left for Abu Dhabi, she moved to live with her widowed mother and younger



Plate 14: Migration has depleted migrant households of its male members.



Plate 15: Many households are left with no adult male members or with old, retired males.

sister. There were no males in the house. Although Mathew's uncle visited them from time to time, Rita depended on herself and took independent decisions on many matters. She never involved Mathew's uncle in her household affairs, except when she was faced with something she did not know about, such as when she decided to buy land. She opened an account in the bank when she received the first remittance of 3,000 Rupees from her husband and after she found a nurse's job in a newly established private hospital through the help of her husband's uncle, she depended on her income and saved all the money sent by her husband. She kept looking for a piece of land for her husband to buy when he visited Kerala. Eventually, she found a ten-cent piece of land for sale, not very far from her mother's house, so she wrote to Mathew about it. Since she did not know anything about land transactions, nor did her husband, she sought the help of Mathew's uncle, who was able to save her some money in the transaction. She even supervised the construction of their house.

Another example is Sham's wife, Mandhana; the prawn peeler. Two years after she moved to live with her parents, her mother died, so Mandhana, being the eldest woman in the house, became responsible for all of the household affairs. Her father, who owns a traditional fishing boat, leaves the house very early in the morning and returns late in the afternoon. All of the household's matters became the responsibility of and were handled by her: the daily shopping, day-to-day care of children, taking them to

doctor's when they were sick, managing the remittances sent by her husband and those sent to her sister by her husband. Mandhana's sister helped her with the household's daily routines, particularly taking care of the children when Mandhana went to the jetty to peel prawns in the afternoon. Although Mandhana had very little education, only enough to read and write, she is a very clever woman. She opened a bank account to deposit the money sent by her husband. "In the beginning I used to cash the whole of the draft but now I withdraw only what I need", Mandhana proudly said. When her sister received the first draft from her husband, Mandhana took her to the bank and helped her open a bank account. After having her fourth child, Mandhana decided to be sterilized, in spite of her father's and younger sister's opposition to the idea . "I have four children now, three boys and one girl. My husband and I should concentrate on them. We want them to have the best in health care and education", she explained.

Even the women who had been living with their husbands' parents or with a close male relative started to play a more active role in the household and began to handle matters and take decisions they had probably never taken before the departure of their husbands. For example, even while she was living in her parents-in-law's house, before she moved to her new house, Hassan's wife Salma felt more secure and had a clearer role to play within the house. Given her access to funds sent by her husband, she felt more free to spend. Salma chose to send her children to a private school and

unlike Hassan's sisters, who did not even finish primary school, Salma insisted that her daughters must complete their secondary education. This was contrary to the Muslim tendency to withdraw their daughters from school and arrange their marriage at an early age. "Everybody criticized me for this", Salma commented, "but I do not care about what they say. I know what is best for my children". Salma also arranged the marriage of her first daughter and the engagement of her second daughter, although the final decision was taken during the visit of her husband to Kerala.

5.2.4 Other Impacts of Migration

Migration seems to increase the age of marriage of both males and females. Although this topic needs more research, from the meagre information available there are some indications that migration may have affected the age of marriage in Kerala. It was indicated in Chapter 3 that on the eve of migration more than 50 per cent of the migrants were young, unmarried and belonged to large and relatively poor households. These young migrants usually carried on their shoulders some of the family responsibilities. Once they started earning some money in the host country they were expected to repay whatever debt their families had incurred to finance their migration, to supplement their households' income to cover the day-to-day expenses, to help to improve the housing condition of the household, etc.. In households where there were marriageable girls, money had to

be saved for their dowries and wedding expenses. Such responsibilities usually militated against early marriage for these young migrants. About 76 per cent of the 392 migrants who got married after migration did so 6 to 10 years after their first migration, usually after their marriageable sisters had been married.

One of the various consequences of the improved financial position of the migrant households was the increasing attention given to the children. Children in migrant households received special consideration in terms of food, medical care and education. As was mentioned earlier, many migrant households I visited kept livestock to provide fresh milk, and fresh eggs for their children. In many of these households, children were sent to relatively expensive private schools. The migrants and their wives often repeated statements such as, "We want the best education for our children," "I want them to be somebody in their life," "As long as we can afford it we will see that our children get the highest level of education." The migrants and their wives were found to have high aspirations for the education of their children. They seemed to have clear plans to give their children the opportunity to acquire high status in the society. Such attitudes toward children's education meant that children spent more years in school, thus increasing the age of marriage for males and females. In Hassan's household, for example, I found that while Hassan's two sisters had not completed their primary education and had married at the ages of 15 and 16, his two

daughters - because of the courageous decision taken by his wife - had completed secondary school. His first daughter married at the age of 18 and the second became engaged at the same age. Another example was Imtiyaz's household. Imtiyaz had four sisters, all of whom were married prior to his and his brother's migration. Three of them were married at the age of 15 and one at the age of 14 and none of them had completed primary school. Imtiyaz and his brother Mahmood had different plans for their children. Not only did they send their children to private school, but they provided them with additional tutorial help at home. Mahmood's eldest child - a 17 year-old girl - was planning to study medicine once she had passed the School Leaving Certificate Examination. Imtiyaz commented:

I believe that education is the most important thing that one can give to his children, not money or land. I have two children. Zaynab - a six year-old girl, and Sultan - a four year-old boy. My wife and I decided not to have any more children. We will concentrate on them and give them every opportunity to succeed in their life. We would like Zaynab to be a doctor and Sultan to be an engineer.

Such indications of more value being attached to education and of upward movement in the age of marriage are highly significant since the great majority of these migrants come from a low-income and low-education Muslim community which is "one of the most conservative in matters of religious observances, marital practices and social conduct" (Nair, 1986:156). These indications, coupled with

the long separation of husbands and wives, could have significant implication for fertility levels.

Another aspect of marriage that seems to have been affected by migration is the kind and amount of dowry the migrant households take or give away in the event of marriage. It is quite a common belief in Kerala that migrant households ask for a higher dowry for their prospective bridegrooms who are working in the Gulf countries than non-migrant households. "Gulf boys... are considered prize bridegrooms and they command a higher dowry than local boys" (Gulati, 1986:206). Since the possession of land in Kerala as well as in India as a whole is considered a sign of respectability, power and high status, migrant households often prefer girls who bring with them dowries in the form of valuable land. I came across many cases in the in-depth study where the migrants, during the time of their short visit, married girls who brought a valuable plot as a dowry.

In the cases where a migrant family was giving in marriage a daughter or a sister, the preference was to give away a liberal dowry, but in the form of cash and/or jewellery rather than land. In some cases the migrant households succeeded in retrieving land which had been given away in dowry before migration. Mahmood and his brother Imtiyaz, for example, bought back the land which their eldest sister took with her when she got married 19 years ago. She was ready to give away the land as a dowry for her 16 year-old daughter. Mahmood suggested to his sister that

since the plot was part of their property they would like to buy it from her and her daughter could take with her as dowry a large sum of money and some jewellery that he would buy for her from the Gulf. She agreed and the plot went back to Mahmood and his brother: "The prospective groom's parents' household did show some resistance but after I had promised to help their son to find a job in the Gulf, they agreed to the new arrangement." Migrant households thus seem to be in a stronger negotiating position than non-migrant households as far as marriage contracts are concerned. These observations seem to support Gulati's observations that

Many young men prefer such a girl from a migrant household over one from a nonmigrant household. This preference is a result not only of the large dowry that the girl is expected to bring but also of hopes that one can then migrate to the Middle East much more easily with the help of the wife's father or brother. In fact, the prospect of obtaining an NOC through a girl's father or brother carries quite a high premium in the marriage negotiations (Gulati, 1986:207).

5.2.5 Use of Remittances and Social Status of the Migrants

As was discussed in Chapter 3, the great majority of the migrants under study come from rural areas, belonged to low-earning groups of 1,000 Rupees or less and belonged to poor families. Thus, it is not surprising if the households of these migrants depend heavily on remittances and spend most of it on current consumption. According to one village-level studies conducted in two villages in Kerala by the Agro-economic Research Centre, not less than 52 per cent of the remittance was spent by the migrants' households on

current consumption such as food, clothing, health care and education⁽¹⁷⁾. Although spending on the above expenditure items is quite understandable, migrants' households seem often to devote exaggerated amounts to such spending.

Talking to people from different educational, economic and social statuses⁽¹⁸⁾ in Kerala I received the impression that migrant households spend more than is necessary to impress their neighbours and fellow villagers. According to a newspaper editor whom I met in Trivandrum, the majority of the Gulf migrants belong to low educational and low-status groups. These people, he explained, think that by spending lavishly on clothing and other consumer goods, building a big house, etc., they will raise their social status. Another comment came from a school teacher whose husband is a migrant working in Saudi Arabia. She thought that members of a migrant's household could be distinguished from others by the way they dressed. She said:

Look at me, I am a teacher and my earning is not bad. I have been saving almost all of the remittances sent by my husband who has been working in Saudi Arabia for five years now. We know that my husband's job in Saudi Arabia is not a permanent one and sooner or later the time will come when he will have to return home for good. Therefore one need not think for the present moment only but one ought to plan for the future and invest his savings in such a way as to keep his improved living standards for as long as he lives, not for one year or two. But these people (the Gulf migrants) are very naive. They just want to show off, spend lavishly in an extraordinary manner on various kinds of celebrations, festivals and ceremonies.

I heard similar comments and criticism even from some of the better-educated migrants themselves. The impression I received in Kerala was that the migrants believed that the more clearly their economic achievement was displayed and noticed by others, the more they felt they were held in great esteem and respected by their neighbours and fellow villagers. A large proportion (41 persons) of the migrants in the in depth-study who had succeeded in building big, attractive houses reported that they had achieved a higher social status in their villages. Relatives, friends and neighbours often sought their advice and assistance. Religious leaders frequently went to their households to collect donations for religious institutions and charities.

It seems that whatever economic gains had been achieved as a result of migration had to be displayed in such a way as to vindicate the achieved status of the migrant household. Migrant households were expected to be better off, and to be seen to be better off. Indeed, as was mentioned in Chapter 4, it was both the significant economic success and the social prestige achieved by earlier migrants that motivated many of the Keralites to venture in the Gulf countries, even if they had to pay a large amount of money.

Thus, the economic accomplishment of the migrant households was often reflected not only in visibly increased consumption levels, but also in generous donations to religious and charitable institutions and lavish spending on occasions such as marriages, festivals and ceremonies. Cases

were not rare where big houses were constructed in an ostentatious manner, not only to provide better housing condition for the family, but also to impress others (see Plates 16 and 17). I saw many big, two storey houses in the villages I visited, which were built on large plots, using the most expensive building materials and at the same time much bigger than the actual need of the family. Such houses are not rare among the migrant households in Kerala. According to one study, about 74 per cent of the migrant households' expenditure on items other than current consumption was spent on land and building (Mathew and Nair, 1978:151).

As was indicated earlier, on their home visits migrants often took with them very expensive foreign goods such as television sets, video recorders, radios, tape recorders and other electrical appliances, on which they paid heavy customs duties. Although similar goods were domestically produced and available in Kerala at cheaper cost migrants believed that foreign goods are not only of better quality but also provide more prestige at home.

Migrants and their households made generous donations to religious and charitable institutions. It became almost a custom among the migrants, particularly Muslims, to donate all or a substantial part of their first remittance to the village mosque or temple. A migrant's wife or mother would frequently visit the mosque or the temple where she prayed and made offerings to placate the gods to protect and ensure



Plate 16: Cases were not rare where big houses were constructed in an ostentatious manner not only to provide a better housing condition for the family but also to impress others.



Plate 17: A permanent house was built to vindicate the achieved status of the migrant and his family.

the safety and success of her son or husband working abroad. Other occasions for religious and charitable donations were religious festivals such as the two Muslim' Eids, the Prophet's birthday, etc., marriages, births, deaths, buying land, starting and completion of house construction and so on. Such generous donations not only provided higher prestige to those who made them but also resulted in increased prosperity for the Muslim religious institutions in Kerala. In Gulati's words,

While the practice of making donations is widespread, it is our broad impression that Muslim men make more substantial contributions to religious institutions and charities. Everyone in and around Alakad remarks how the mosque there has prospered in recent years. The building complex has expanded and it celebrates the various Muslim festivals on a scale never witnessed before.(1987:46)

Another avenue in which the migrant households spent lavishly was celebrations and ceremonies. In marriage celebrations, for instance, migrant households spent thousands of Rupees on decoration and food, especially when the bride was from a migrant household. During my field-work in Kerala, I attended the marriage ceremony of a migrant's daughter. I was invited to this marriage celebration by the bride's father, who had been working in Abu Dhabi for 12 years. It was noticed that not only had they given their daughter a substantial dowry, way beyond their means (15,000 Rupees in cash and 250 grammes of gold in the form of jewellery) but they were also keen to let everyone in the

village and beyond know about the large dowry which their daughter was taking with her. The celebration itself must have cost a fortune. Food was provided on a most lavish scale. It seemed that all the village was invited (see Plates 18 and 19). It became apparent why Keralites consider having two or three daughters or sisters as a problem, and having sons as a sign of good luck!

In short, to look at the issue in a sober and realistic fashion, the great majority of the unskilled and semi-skilled Keralite migrant workers frittered away their savings. In the cases where part of the remittances was saved, it was often kept in cash or converted into jewellery. Very few migrants managed to put their savings into gainful investments. Apart from the few migrants who reported that they have invested some of their savings in livestock, only nine Keralites in the in-depth study stated that they had invested a large part of their savings in forms other than deposits in the bank or jewellery. Three of the nine invested most of their savings in urban shop premises for rental. They claimed that they made good enough money to provide them with reasonable living conditions when they went back to Kerala for good. One invested in a grocery shop, temporarily run by his retired father and another put a large sum of money in converting the coffee shop he had owned before migration into a restaurant which he had leased for ten years. He was planning to run it himself when he returned to Kerala. Two of the remaining four invested their savings in coconut land. The other two, who were brothers,



Plate 18: The migrants' households devote exaggerated amounts to some conspicuous consumption like a big marriage feasts.



Plate 17:

The migrants believed that the more clearly their economic achievement was displayed and noticed by others, the more they felt they were held in great esteem and respected by their neighbours and fellow villagers.

had used their savings jointly with their third brother - who had been working in Oman for 12 years as a salesman in an automobile spare parts shop - to establish a similar business in Kerala. The three brothers were now planning to extend their activities and start an automobile service station. It should be noted, however, that seven of the of these nine migrants had had some business experience of one kind or another which they had acquired either before or after migration.

The rest of the migrants in the in-depth study who had accumulated substantial savings invested their savings only in the form of bank deposits or gold and jewellery. There are various factors that might have led to this attitude. First, the great majority of the migrants had a low-level of education, were ignorant of the various avenues of investment and did not possess any experience of business. In Nair's words,

Migrant households are mostly poor and not well educated and are not aware of the possibilities of investment in shares and securities of private or public corporations. This applies to most migrant families as well. In fact, except for a few selected business communities and very rich business families in urban areas, investment in stocks and shares is a totally strange proposition (Nair, 1986:101-102).

Second, as was discussed in Chapter 2 investing in the public sector in Kerala is not safe because of its inefficiency and its frequently reported losses. Moreover, there is a widespread belief that Kerala is not a suitable

place to invest because of prolonged labour troubles; a problem which has led to the moving of many private corporations from Kerala to other neighbouring states.

Third, it is worth mentioning the total absence of any attempt to reach these migrants and make them aware of the various investment opportunities. These migrants need reassurance and encouragement. There are some indications that, given enough encouragement and motivation, migrants would invest in projects which would demonstrate their efficiency and profitability. A public sector corporation producing electronic goods succeeded in 1976 in raising not less than 1.2 million Rupees from Keralites working in the Gulf countries (Kurien, 1978:88).

6. Summary

This chapter has attempted to explore the economic and social impact of emigration on the home country and on the migrants' households.

Remittances from overseas workers are an important source of foreign exchange earnings for Asian labour-exporting countries. In the case of India, there has been a great increase (from 1.4 billion rupees in 1970-71 to 28.4 billion in 1985-86), coinciding with large-scale migration to the Middle East. These have had a significant impact on the balance of payments. For example, in 1984-85, they represented 24.9% of exports, 16% of imports, financed 44.4% of balance of payment deficit, accounted

for 14.7% of current account receipts and 134.5% of loan interest/amortization.

However, impact of migration on India's output and production have been negligible. Micro-level studies suggest that most migrants were previously unemployed, and had little or no education and skills. Those skilled workers who migrated would have been easily replaceable from India's vast pool of surplus labour.

As Kerala is one of India's smallest states, yet has the highest outflow of labour, it might be assumed that the state would be more affected than others by migration. On the assumption that remittances to Kerala account for 40-50% of all remittances to India from the Middle East (Gulati and Modi, 1983, U.N. 1987; Nair, 1986b) remittances as a proportion of state domestic product, according to the most recent figures available, were 10.3-12.8%. These are distributed among the districts according to their participation in emigration. If not for these remittances, Kerala would have registered a negative growth rate between 1975/76 and 1984/85. The impact favoured districts with low domestic product and growth, reducing regional disparities in income distribution. The effect has been most felt in construction, and in tertiary sectors of the economy.

As at country-wide level, emigration has had little effect on the labour market situation, because of the high level of unemployment. In general, the labour situation is

also insensitive to returnees, comparatively few of whom have sought paid employment, due to age, lack of qualifications, self-employment or intention to re-migrate. However, there has been some impact on the construction sector, as remittances have financed new projects, yet many skilled and semi-skilled construction workers have emigrated.

Migrants' households have been affected both economically and socially. Economically, recipients of remittances from migrants have higher ownership than non-recipients of land, buildings, jewellery, livestock and consumer goods. These may increase household income in the long-term. For example, purchase of land or livestock may enable recipients to produce a surplus of foodstuffs for sale. Standard of living was said to have improved for most migrants' households, increasing with time spent by the migrant in the Gulf. Of the 12.3% who reported a lower standard of living, most had been in the United Arab Emirates for less than 5 years, and might therefore not yet have made good the initial cost of migration. Housing had improved for migrants' households, ranging from repairs to extensions, or even building of a new house. For some, remittances enabled family members to move to a house of their own, instead of occupying a room in the parents' house.

Although some migrants' families set up independent households with the money earned, the general pattern was

for migration to increase interdependence. The family pooled resources to fund the migrant's trip, and he, once established, helped others to migrate, and helped with dowries, education etc. for those left behind. Interdependence was increased by the need for wives and children to be entrusted to the care of some other relative, often by some form of joint living arrangement. Our findings in this respect are consistent with Gulati (1984, 1983). Families at home also arranged marriages for single migrants.

Much of the impact of migration was felt by women, whose responsibilities increased as households became depleted of male members. Many became used to making independent decisions, and even those living with a male relative began to play a more active role, partly through their access to money sent by the migrants.

Although more research is needed, it appears that migration has implications for age at marriage. Many migrants delayed marriage till they had fulfilled family responsibilities (e.g. paying marriage expenses of sisters, redeeming debts) while married migrants' remittances enabled their children's education to be prolonged. These factors, together with separation of husband and wife, could affect fertility.

Enhanced social prestige was found to be an important consequence of migration. Migrant husbands are seen as good catches, commanding high dowries, for example.

Moreover, a large proportion of remittances is used to finance current consumption, as much to enhance prestige as for necessity. Migrants' families, especially those in low education/status groups, strive to impress by generous donations to religious and charitable institutions, and by lavish spending on ceremonies, festivals etc. Few make gainful investments, perhaps due to lack of education and experience, insecurity of Kerala's public sector, and lack of encouragement.

On this note we conclude our case study of Keralites migrants and their households. It now remains to draw together our findings, summarizing the contribution of the study to our understanding of migration, the limitation of the present work, and interesting features which would merit further study.

NOTES

1. For more details on this issue see Paine, 1974:39-42.
2. Since these figures are at current prices, some of the growth simply reflects inflation and because we do not have any estimate of the inflation rate that would allow us to see how big a factor this is, one should bear in mind that this growth is not all real growth
3. For more details on these issues see Nayyar, 1987 and United Nation, 1987.
4. See footnote 2.
5. According to Nair, 1988:31, there are five districts in Kerala which could be described as heavy migration districts. These are Trivandrum, Trichur, Malappuram, Kozhikode and Cannanore. See also Government of Kerala, 1988:5.
6. Other studies have shown that these three districts continued to be the poorest districts in Kerala in 1984-85 (Government of Kerala, 1988:29 and Nair, 1988:31.
7. Dispersion was calculated by dividing the range by the average which worked out to be 0.6616 for district-wise per capita domestic product and 0.2925 for district-wise per capita income. Thus the dispersion of the latter worked out at less than half of that of the former (United Nation, 1987:84).
8. For more details on the effect of remittances on the various sub-sectors of the tertiary sector see Nair, 1988:25-32.
9. According to one study utilizing a rough approximation the numbers of the returned migrants have increased from 5,006 persons in 1981 to 33,328 in 1986 (Nair, 1988:10).
10. Information regarding financial assets such as bank deposits, deposits in investment funds, shares and money held in cash etc. were not collected by the study.
11. The materials commonly used for walls of houses in the State of Kerala are rubble, burnt brick, unburnt brick, cut laterite, mud and thatch. The rubble is the most expensive material and the thatch is the cheapest and resorted to by the very poor households.
12. The most expensive material used for roofing in Kerala is reinforced cement concrete, followed by tile, thatch and asbestos, which is the cheapest.

13. The floor of the house was usually made of mosaic concrete, cement concrete, red/black oxide in cement, tile or cowdung plastering. The last was the cheapest and used by the poorest households. Mosaic concrete was the most expensive material used for flooring.
14. A cent is equal to $1/100^{\text{th}}$ of an acre.
15. It is quite common in Kerala for more than one household to share one latrine facility.
16. Although some of the increase in the consumption level may simply reflect inflation, my impression is that there was true improvement in the consumption level
17. Agro-economic Research Centre, "Impact of Foreign Remittances on the Economy of a Rural Area in Kerala," Agricultural Situation in India, 37 (October 1982):452, cited in Nair, 1986b:99.
18. During my visit to Kerala I talked to school teachers, professors, politicians, journalists, businessmen, shopkeepers, ordinary villagers, fishermen, etc..

CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate the socio-economic conditions and the life style of the unskilled and semi-skilled Keralite migrants working in Abu Dhabi, the capital city of the United Arab Emirates. It is the first research of its kind in the State of Abu Dhabi as well as in the country as a whole. The study has analysed the phenomenon of international migration as a process, a set of interrelated phases in which no phase can be analysed independent from the others. Although the study has focused on the migrants' own perceptions and evaluations of their experiences it, nonetheless, did not dismiss other structural factors characterizing both the sending area and the receiving area. Thus, the study has shown how the positions of the Keralite migrants in Abu Dhabi are consequences not only of the legal social, economic and political circumstances associated with the receiving society (the U.A.E.) but also of socio-economic factors associated with the sending society (Kerala) as well as of the ways in which the migration of these Keralites was carried out.

In this study the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the unskilled and semi-skilled Keralite migrants in Abu Dhabi and their households back in Kerala have been analysed. The results have shown that Keralite migrants in the U.A.E. come disproportionately from certain regions and religious backgrounds. The great majority of them were Muslims, below 36 years of age and unmarried.

Contrary to a widely held assumption in the U.A.E., they were all literate at least to the primary level. The results also showed, however, that the great majority of them were from rural backgrounds with no vocational training or work experience. Most of them were unemployed and had little or no earnings on the eve of migration and therefore were dependents on their families' heads. Moreover, almost all of the Keralites studied came from extended-family households much larger in size than the average household in Kerala. Most of the households were poor, with little or no cultivable land, with total assets valued at less than 100,000 Rupees and with annual income of 15,000 Rupees or less.

The reasons why these Keralites migrated to the U.A.E. were found to be rather complex. The state of Kerala is a predominantly rural region with several unique characteristics distinguishing it from other states in India. Kerala has one of the highest population growth rates, the highest population density, one of the lowest income levels and the highest rates of unemployment and under-employment among all states in India. The imbalance between land and population has created large-scale unemployment and chronic poverty and at the same time the organized sector has not been developing so as to absorb the ever increasing job seekers in the state. On the other hand, the educational standards of Keralites have improved significantly, thus increasing the people's aspirations to levels that could not be fulfilled in a stagnant economy

such as that of Kerala. Moreover in such conditions of economic difficulty the obligation of each member in the family increases. These socio-economic pressures appeared to have had a strong influence on the migration behaviour in Kerala, particularly in the economically most backward districts of the northern region. The low probability of finding a job in Kerala may have influenced the decision to venture abroad.

Migration, however, cannot take place unless opportunities exist. In the post-colonial period Keralites have migrated to most parts of the world including the Arab States of the Gulf. The specific historical, cultural and economic relations between Kerala and the Gulf States in general and the U.A.E. in particular facilitated the migration of many Keralites to these states. As indicated in Appendix 1, contrary to the general assumption that Asian immigration to the Gulf States started after 1975 as the traditional labour suppliers (other Arab countries) failed to meet the huge demands of the oil-rich countries, Asian migrants, particularly Indians, have been present in these States, including the U.A.E., then known as the Trucial States, long before the huge increases in oil prices took place. Relatively large communities of Indian migrants have been living in the U.A.E. as well as in some other Gulf States. They had established themselves as merchants, brokers to Arab merchants and agents of Indian merchants. When the British concluded various agreements and treaties with the Arab Sheikhdoms in the early 20th century, the Gulf

region became a British domain. Just as in all British colonies Indians were brought into the Arab Sheikhdoms to act as the functionaries of the colonial administration. The Indian communities in the region increased even more as the area became wide open to them and their position was reinforced and their activities had diversified due to the special privileges accorded to them as British subjects. With the discovery of oil, the nascent oil companies depended heavily on labour imported from the Indian sub-continent. Large numbers of skilled and semi-skilled Indians were recruited and employed in the oil companies owned or controlled by the British. The employment policies of the oil companies were influenced by the British who desired to promote the employment of Indians over those of other foreign nationalities. Many Indians from the State of Kerala established themselves as petty traders, retail sellers, or owners of restaurants and small shops. When the need for labour increased in the U.A.E. as the development and modernization process accelerated due to the increases in the prices of oil, labour from India (especially from Kerala State) migrated in large numbers, facilitated by the recruiting channels which had already been established by the pioneering migrants in partnership with Arab natives. Thus, migration from India to the Arab Gulf State was not initiated by the huge increase in the oil prices and the consequent acceleration in the urbanization and modernization process; rather the migration flows were merely increased by these factors.

While the economic problems in Kerala on the one hand, and the need in the U.A.E. of young, cheap labour on the other, created the conditions under which large numbers of Keralites might go abroad, this study has demonstrated that the decision to migrate was not an automatic response by passive actors. Although the relative poverty and lack of employment opportunities in Kerala seemed to have been overwhelmingly important in stimulating people to migrate and seek employment in the Gulf countries, these factors appeared to affect various groups in different ways according to religious affiliation, educational attainment and level of income in Kerala.

Moreover, the in-depth case studies showed that the economic factors were usually tied in with non-economic problems, suggesting that migration decisions are often complex and involve many interrelated factors. The decision to migrate was also affected by personal factors, showing that poverty is a relative condition and means different things to different people. Economic reasons were often expressed in terms of contributing to the economic situation of the family, enabling the marriage of daughters and/or sisters, providing better education for children or brothers, building an extra room in the parents' house, acquiring independence from the extended family by building a separate house and, most importantly, enhancing one's prestige within one's family unit and within the village and raising the status of one's household in the sending community.

It is worth mentioning that although these Keralite migrants are relatively poor, they are not the poorest in Kerala. In many cases a relatively large amount of money had to be made available to finance the initial cost of migration. On the eve of migration the great majority of the migrants were dependents on their family-heads and had to depend on their family members, other relatives and friends to finance the initial cost of migration. In many instances the family had to sell or mortgage some of the household's jewellery or part of the household's land in order to finance the migration of one family member. This involved a certain amount of negotiation between the family members and other relatives, which suggests that the decision to migrate is not totally governed by personal factors; but the family as a whole seemed to influence these decisions. The finding of this study that the migrants, as well as their family members, were very active participants in the process of migration, contradicts the image conveyed by structural theorists of migrants as rather passive elements mechanically reacting to external and mainly economic stimuli.

Nonetheless, it is equally understandable that without the combination of the structural problems in Kerala such as over-population, unemployment, improved levels of education and high levels of poverty, few of these Keralites would have left their families and gone abroad to work as unskilled and semi-skilled workers for several years. There is thus an interaction between the pressures of macro-

structural factors and the situation of the individual that influences the decision to migrate.

Migration of these Keralites was also influenced by the presence of household members, other relatives and friends in the host country. On the eve of migration the great majority of the Keralites under study had at least one member of their household, a relative or a friend working in the U.A.E.. These not only provided the would-be migrants with the necessary information on employment opportunities but also facilitated their entrance to the host country by providing them with the essential documents such as visas and no-objection certificates. Thus the migration of the Keralites under investigation took the form of "chain migration" in which a migrant once in the host country helps another member of his household, a relative or a friend in the sending community to join him and after the second member has settled down, the two of them help a third and a fourth person to make his way to the host country. In this way the chain of migration develops. Moreover, most of the Keralites under study stayed for a long time moving from one job to another. Some of them had been living in the U.A.E. for more than 15 years. Therefore, one cannot consider these migrants as short-term temporary contract migrants. Unlike, for example, the well planned and regulated movement of Turkish migrant workers to West Germany after 1962, the great majority of Keralite migrants were found to be rather long-term migrants who entered the U.A.E. through various

informal channels with almost complete absence of official interference.

Reliance on networks of relatives and friends in finding employment in the host country on the one hand, and the absence of clearly defined legal rights and any effective official agency, governmental or otherwise, which gives the migrants any real protection against malpractices by Kafeels (sponsors), resulted in various problems and difficulties for the migrants. Since the great majority of the Keralites under investigation had entered the host country through informal channels (relatives and friends) they had not secured employment prior to migration. Even the small proportion who reported that they had made arrangement for jobs before coming to the U.A.E. did not get the jobs they were recruited for, either because they were recruited by relatives and friends on the basis of merely anticipated vacancies or because they were recruited by irresponsible agencies for non-existing firms and companies. Thus the great majority of the migrants depended on their relatives and friends to find employment.

However, depending on kinship and friendship networks in the host country to find jobs resulted in long waiting periods between arrival in the host country and engaging in employment. The length of the waiting period was also affected by the process of urbanization and development in the U.A.E. over the period. The waiting period for those who arrived before or after the construction boom which took

place in the period between 1975 and 1980 was much longer than that for those who came within the construction boom period. During such long waiting periods, which in many cases extended to over 12 months, migrants had to rely on relatives and friends for accommodation, food and even loans.

As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the institutionalization of the Kafeel system in the host country, coupled with the absence of a trade union or any other collective bargaining system, gave the employer great power to exploit his expatriate workers. At the same time, it weakened the position of the migrants who because of fear of losing their job or even being deported if they complained, usually chose to submit silently to such injustice and exploitation. If unhappy with his job or wages, a migrant would search for another job rather than enter into conflict with his employer. This helps to explain the great mobility of the migrants and their difficulty in holding down one job, which was exacerbated in some cases by the policies adopted by firms and companies in the private sector to cut down the number of their workers from time to time or to get rid of all the workers once a project was finished. The weakness of their position was also reflected in the "down grading" of the skills and occupations of the migrants, long working hours with no over-time payment, and low wages. As long as the Kafeel system continues to exist and the migrant workers are not properly protected under local laws, they will continue to live in fear and the

potential for mistreatment and exploitation will always remain.

Nonetheless, the migrants often succeeded in utilizing the personal relationship between them and their kafeels and employers to get round the legal procedures and regulations and take more than one job, to change jobs and kafeels, to obtain visas for their friends and relatives and to correct the legal positions of the illegal migrants.

The unfavourable working conditions in the private sector made many migrants seek employment in the government sector, which seemed more attractive because it was more secure, involved less laborious work, including fewer working hours, entitled them to more holidays during the year, and most importantly paid better than similar jobs in the private sector. A caretaker or a carpenter, for instance, in the government sector would work for seven or eight hours a day for a monthly salary far better than what he would get working for eight to twelve hours in the private sector. Other migrants, after having worked in the private sector for several years, were able to establish themselves as self employed. Apart from these, all of the migrants who were working in the private sector expressed their desire to work in the government sector and those who managed to work in the government were very pleased with their jobs.

Some of the non-Muslim Keralites (Christians and Hindus) believed they were discriminated against in the

government sector. Although discrimination against non-Muslims is not an overt policy of the government the various statements made by these migrants suggest that at least at the level of unskilled and semi-skilled workers discriminatory tendencies against non-Muslims in the hiring process may have been practiced. However, it is difficult to say whether this reflects a policy or just individual attitudes on the part of those in charge of hiring semi-skilled and unskilled workers in the government sector.

It has been argued by various studies of the Indian migrants working in the Gulf countries that migrants from India have been able to save and remit a substantial proportion of their earnings despite the high cost of living in the Gulf states. They have been able to do so, it is suggested, because the employment contracts of the migrants entitle them to free accommodation, free or highly subsidized food and transportation, and free medical facilities. This may apply to a small minority of migrants whose rights are protected by some arrangement between the governments of the sending and receiving countries, or to professional and highly skilled migrants whose contracts contain officially defined terms which are respected by employers; but it does not apply to the great majority of migrants studied here.

The present research has shown that the vast majority of the Keralite migrants under investigation came to the U.A.E. through informal channels (relatives and friends)

without entering into formal written contracts. Even those who came to the U.A.E. through recruiting agencies or through direct application to an employer did not receive what was stipulated in their contracts. Moreover, the vast majority of the migrants had changed their Kafeels and jobs which meant that they were recruited locally, often informally and on new terms that not only deprived them any accommodation provided by the employer, but also considerably reduced their wages and other benefits. The medical services and facilities which were prior to 1983 free to all of the country's population, now have to be paid for by all expatriates.

Expatriates in Abu Dhabi come from so many different Arab and non-Arab countries and work at so many different occupation levels and under so many different conditions that any generalized conclusion is difficult. However, one might argue that the great majority of the migrants (particularly those engaged in semi-skilled and unskilled occupations) share a lack of protection and are totally dependent on the good will of their institutional or individual kafeel. Thus, it is the view of this researcher that the lack of protection due to the institutionalization of the kafeel system, the absence of legally stipulated working conditions and minimum wages coupled with the high cost of living in Abu Dhabi are the main factors generating the unfavourable living conditions of the migrants.

Although by no means all of the Keralites under study had been employed all the time, the vast majority of them were making a net economic gain. The great majority of those who at the time of the study were regularly employed earned less than 2,000 Derhams (less than 550 Dollars) per month and about half of them earned less than 1,000 Derhams (275 Dollars). Although the migrants desired to increase their earnings by working at part-time jobs in addition to their principal occupation, only a few of those working in the government sector were able to find one. The monthly income of the migrants varied according to the sector in which they were employed. While the self-employed Keralites had a higher income than those in both the government and the private sectors, the government sector's employees received between 50 to 100 per cent more than their counterparts in the private sector.

Keralites under investigation did their utmost to minimize their expenditure in the host country and remit to their families back in Kerala as much as possible. Their small earnings, coupled with the high cost of living in Abu Dhabi, forced them to adopt a very modest way of life, living in large numbers in one house and even in one room, eating collectively, and avoiding any unnecessary expenditures in order to minimize their expenditures and maximize their remittances. Through such arrangements many of these Keralites were successful in remitting the larger part of their earnings at monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly intervals.

To further maximize the value of their remittances quite a few of the migrants often resorted to various illegal remitting methods. However, the dangers involved in using illegal methods, on the one hand, and the policy adopted by the Indian Government of allowing the rupee to float, depreciating its exchange value, on the other, encouraged these Keralites to use the legal means such as bank drafts and bank transfers more often. Other methods such as sending money with relatives or friends going home, or mail transfers, were less popular. The majority of the migrants sent their remittances to their parents and/or spouse and a very small proportion transferred their savings directly to their "Non-Resident Accounts" in Kerala's banks.

It is worth mentioning, however, that not all of what was remitted by the migrants was actually saved. Part of what was remitted was consumed by the migrants' families. As a result, the great majority of the migrants who were able to remit part of their earnings to Kerala reported that they had been making average annual savings of 10,000 Derhams or less.

As far as the housing condition of the Keralite migrants are concerned, the findings of this study provide strong support to those of studies of single immigrants in other Gulf States. Housing was one of the biggest problems encountered by the unskilled and semi-skilled single Keralites. The housing conditions of the Keralites under study, as well as of unskilled and semi-skilled single

immigrants in general, were affected by the overall housing situation in the U.A.E. and in the city of Abu Dhabi in particular. Housing in Abu Dhabi is characterized by shortage of housing units, particularly low-cost housing units, high and rapidly increasing rents and absence of laws governing the landlord-tenant relationship. The government's efforts to meet the citizens' needs for housing and its decision to provide housing for its white-collar employees did not, however, solve the problem of housing for the unskilled and semi-skilled immigrants working in both the government and private sectors. These were left to be exploited by the housing market which is monopolized by a small local bourgeoisie.

The socio-economic position of the immigrants has, of course, contributed to their poor housing conditions. Given the low income of the unskilled and semi-skilled single migrants on the one hand and their desire to save and remit back home as much as possible of their meagre income on the other, they had no choice but to move to distant areas outside Abu Dhabi city or to live collectively in extremely overcrowded houses in the slum areas of the city. The housing conditions of these immigrants were further aggravated by the tendency for each ethnic group to settle in specific locations within the slum areas forming clusters of houses occupied exclusively by those from the same area or state or speaking the same language. Thus, the great majority of the study group lived in houses of high density (30 persons or more per house), and about one third lived in

houses accommodating 50 persons or more with up to 13 persons in a room. Moreover, almost all of the 50 houses in which the study group lived were in a dilapidated condition, and were rented unfurnished. Most of them had inadequate facilities such as lavatories, bathrooms and kitchens. Tenants themselves had to build additional facilities. These poor housing conditions were reflected in the health of these immigrants.

Ties of kinship, friendship and affinity had also influenced the distribution of the study group Keralites in the rooms of the 50 houses in which they were living. Almost all of the 188 rooms in the 50 houses were occupied by Keralites coming from the same village, often relatives or friends. Their desire to live with relatives, friends or fellow villagers made even those who were provided with free accommodation share the rent of a room in order to spend weekends and holidays with their relatives, friends and fellow villagers. This was facilitated by the fact that Keralites, like all other migrants from the Indian sub-continent, do not find anything wrong in sharing a bedroom with others, and there is no social stigma in the sending or the host country against such behaviour.

This study also showed that the concept of assimilation seems to be irrelevant to a multinational society such as that of the U.A.E.. As discussed in Chapter 8, migrant workers are legally constrained and socially excluded and therefore, they do not participate in the social life of the

host society. Accommodation, rather, appears to be a more adequate term to describe the various relationships between the migrants and the host society. In this respect, the findings of this study are not dissimilar from those observed in studies of Asian immigrants elsewhere. Keralites in Abu Dhabi did not participate in every sphere of the society's social life. Their participation was confined to the work sphere. The resulting relationships between them and other groups in Abu Dhabi were fleeting and single-stranded.

Several factors may have helped to shape these relationships. First, the Keralites' culture differs significantly from that of the local people and other immigrant groups including Indians from different linguistic-regional groups. Second, In Abu Dhabi, immigrants (particularly single immigrants) are confined to certain residential areas and are prevented from joining local clubs and societies. Regardless of their ethnicity, nationality or race, single immigrants in Abu Dhabi are not only confined to specific residential areas but also socially segregated. Third, the clustering of a large number of Keralite immigrants living in close-by houses coupled with nonexistence of any common neighbourhood activities at a group level except for the two small mosques made it natural for them to insulate themselves inside their cultural group and to maintain a minimum contact with the local and other immigrant groups. Fourth, although it is difficult to measure the attitudes of the indigenous population and other

Arab groups towards the Asian migrants in general there are some indications that the local people and the Arab migrants have a negative and even hostile attitude towards the Asian migrants. These attitudes are reinforced by the official policies which ensure that migrants have no political rights, are occupationally restricted and have very limited social and welfare rights. The Keralites seemed to be aware of these attitudes and the institutionalised discrimination against them and this reinforced the social separation between them and other groups.

One major sphere in which the Keralites might have made contact with other groups is the workplace. However, even here it was observed that the relationships between the Keralites and other ethnic groups were kept to a minimum and hardly extended outside the workplace.

The society in the U.A.E. is a multinational one in which different groups are perceived in terms of nationality and ethnicity. The population is divided into two main groups, the locals and the immigrants, with the latter occupying a pre-determined inferior position in both the economic and the social sphere. Within the immigrant groups, however, Asians, mainly from the Indian sub-continent, are predominantly employed in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs and therefore occupy the lowest status in the social stratification. As discussed in the chapters, they not only suffer from legal restrictions but are also socially segregated. In circumstances such as these, coupled with the

lack of proper protection, immigrants of one nationality or distinct ethnic group have no choice but to rely on kinship network as a survival strategy. Keralites are no exception. To cope with the insecure working and living environment in the host country, the Keralites depended heavily on their own networks. Keralites' social networks and the relationships within these networks were shaped and patterned by kinship, place of origin and religious affiliation. Three kinds of social networks were observed within the Keralite community under study. At one level, there were the rather small networks built on kinship. The relationships in these networks were very dense and multiplex. Having a close relative in the host society was so important for intimate social relationship and mutual aid that those with no close relatives had to invoke and activate their distant kinship ties, which were latent or unrealized before migration.

Nonetheless, the success of these kinship networks in providing much mutual help for their members depended on rather larger networks based on the villages of origin. In the case of Muslim Keralites, not only were the housing arrangements based on kinship and villages of origin, but all Keralites coming from the same village formed a larger network by entering into an informal voluntary association often named after their village of origin. These associations provided very important services, protection and security for its members. Their services also extended

back to the village community in Kerala. No similar associations were found among the Hindus or the Christians.

Keralites from different villages or belonging to different religions maintained some boundaries in relation to each other. These boundaries, however, allowed for some contact between them. They did not prevent them from helping each other in time of need, such as lodging a newcomer or helping a fellow Keralite until he found work. In order to survive in the host country Keralite migrants had to put aside their religious and caste differences. However, the relationships which such reciprocal services entailed were transient and single-stranded and usually ended once the situation which initiated them ceased to exist. Thus migration seems to reinforce traditional kinship structures at one level and break them down at another

Intense relationships do not necessarily involve face-to-face interaction. Keralites in the host country kept very strong relationships with their relatives back in Kerala and face-to-face interaction was replaced with contacts through letters, telephone calls and short holiday visits to Kerala. This is quite natural since the Keralites under study were single immigrants whose presence in the host country is temporary.

Thus, one would argue that migrants do not break down in the host country, rather they try to overcome whatever problems they face by various strategies. Through their social networks the Keralites under study were found to

adjust successfully to the conditions in the U.A.E.. The various social networks not only provided the Keralites with explanation and a realization of their situation in the host country but they continued to remind them of the conditions in their home villages back in Kerala and their intentions of improving these conditions and enhancing their households' economic and social status no matter how difficult the situation was in the host country. These Keralites realized and acknowledged that they were occupying very low economic and social status in the host country and that they were exploited but they were willing to sacrifice themselves for their families' sakes. Moreover, no matter how long they lived in Abu Dhabi the Keralites were aware of the fact that they were temporary migrants who would eventually go back to Kerala. Given these limitations imposed on them by the host society they had no choice but to make the best of the situation. Therefore, the significant others for these Keralites were those in their villages where they eventually would return. If they were successful migrants they would earn the respect of their households' members and their fellow villagers. Thus, the social reality for these Keralites lay in their ability to improve the economic and social status of their households back in Kerala. This explained their willingness to tolerate their unfavourable conditions and reduced their interest in their inferior status in the host country.

It seems, therefore, that the important issue is not how migrants adjust to the conditions in the host country

but how they become powerless and segregated and how their social networks and their ties with the sending community may reinforce their segregation and powerlessness in the destination. The social, economic and political circumstances in the host society are not sufficient by themselves to explain the position of the migrants. The socio-economic factors associated with the sending society and the way in which the migration is carried out need to be incorporated in the analysis.

Like all temporary workers, these Keralites have provided several advantages to the host country. They are cheap labour, docile and make no demands upon the government for any social or welfare services. Because their families cannot join them, the pressure on the host country's resources is minimized. Moreover, they are easily disposed of and deported if they become socially or politically problematic and if their movement is effectively controlled and regulated then they can be reduced or increased according to the needs of the economic and political situation in the host country.

Although the impact of migration on the sending country is debatable, in the case of India there seems to be no doubt that migration has contributed positively to the national economy. At the national and Kerala State levels, while the impact of the large outflows of Indian workers to the Gulf countries on the labour market and output has been practically negligible, the impact of remittance inflows was

significant. Because almost half of the Indian workers outflow was from Kerala State the positive economic impact of migration on the State was even greater and was more pronounced in those districts which experienced extensive emigration outflows.

Since the fieldwork for this study was completed before the recent Gulf Crisis which started with the invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi troops in August 1990, the impact of this crisis on migration was not analysed in this study. However, some studies investigating the economic impact of the Gulf crisis on the Indian economy argue that at the all-India level the economic impact was negligible (Saith, 1992). The returned migrants formed a very small proportion (0.05 per cent) of the total workers. The loss of remittances from Iraq and Kuwait was not insignificant in absolute terms (about 180 million US Dollars per year) but its relative importance in the total value of imports, or in the total availability of foreign exchange was very small. Moreover, The Iraq-Kuwait crisis might have induced Indian migrants in the other Gulf countries to alter their savings and remittance-transfer behaviour and transfer to India part or all of their accumulated savings which had previously been retained by them. Such behaviour might have compensated for the loss of remittances from Iraq and Kuwait. Since Kerala accounts for between 40 and 50 per cent of the total international labour migration from India, the relative size of the displaced migrants from this state would have been larger for Kerala than for any other state in India and

therefore the impact of the Gulf crisis on Kerala would have been larger. Nonetheless, one study (Saith, 1992) shows that the impact of the Gulf crisis was far from constituting a major problem for the Kerala economy.

Moreover, the Gulf crisis has resulted in the deportation of hundreds of thousands of Arab migrants from the Gulf States. It is estimated that about 600,000 Yemenis working in Saudi Arabia were deported from the country (Saith, 1992:105). Similar situations occurred in Qatar and to a lesser extent in the U.A.E. and immediately after the crisis almost all of the Palestinians, Jordanians and Sudanese were driven out of the country. This would probably increase the dependency of the Gulf States on Asian labour migrants, of whom the Indians, because of their docility, adaptability, hard working habits and their lack of political interaction, would form a large proportion.

The economic and social impact of migration on the migrants' households back in Kerala was found to be particularly significant. The major economic impact of the Keralites' migration to the Gulf States at the household level has been the inflow of remittances and the subsequent improvement in living standards of the migrants' families. This study has shown that the longer the time spent in the U.A.E. the more likely it is that the living standards of the migrants' families have improved. Important indications of the better living standards of the migrants' households were improved housing conditions, higher consumption levels,

increased livestock possession and growth in ownership of electric utilities. It was noticed during the field work in Kerala that whatever economic gains had been achieved as a result of migration had to be displayed in such a way as to vindicate the achieved status of the migrant household. Thus, the balance of remittances after meeting day-to-day routine consumption expenses of the migrant's household was spent on various forms of conspicuous consumption.

Other social impacts of migration were also significant. Migration has reinforced the relationship between household members and strengthened interdependence within family and kinship networks. This was seen by the migrants as positive impact. This is quite understandable given the nature of the host society and the ways by which migration was carried out. Without the help provided by the family and kinship networks in both the sending and the receiving societies, migration might not have been possible for many Keralites. Keralite migrants depended on these networks not only in the initial stage of migration but also while they were in the host country. Family interdependence was particularly important and necessary for those who on the eve of migration were married and had young children as these needed to be taken care of. While the wives left behind might be able to handle the day-to-day household responsibilities and manage the daily budget of the household, they often were not able to take care of other things such as building or repairing the house, repayment of debts or managing of funds remitted by their husbands and so

on, although some of them did so. Even the unmarried migrants depended on their households, not only to manage whatever funds they might remit home but also to look for the right girls to be their brides when they decided to marry.

Another positive impact of migration was that on the female roles. Although this researcher did not have the time to investigate this issue thoroughly, there were some indications that women left behind had taken on increasing responsibilities in running households, caring for and educating children and even arranging for the marriage of the daughters. Moreover, Keralite migration to the U.A.E. and other Gulf countries seems to have had some demographic effects. It seems to have increased the age of marriage of both males and females, and to have reduced fertility levels.

Despite these positive impacts of migration on the migrants and their households, the process of migration of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers from Kerala to Abu Dhabi is simply a process of exploitation. Exploitation starts by recruiting agencies in Kerala and visa traders in Abu Dhabi, from the moment a Keralite decides to seek employment abroad. Once he is in the host society, he is exploited by his employer. The institutionalization of the Kafael system, the absence of clearly defined legal rights and ineffectiveness of legal and administrative procedures make the migrant vulnerable and easily exploitable by the

employer. What makes the position of the migrant even worse is the absence of legal trade unions. No unions, strikes or any form of collective complaint against malpractices and exploitative measures by employers or kafeels are allowed. This situation prevents the migrants from entering into collective bargaining with their employers. Any bargaining is totally left to be conducted on an informal and personal level between the migrant worker and his employer. Such arrangement reinforces the position of the employer. It is a standard practice for the employer to take the passports of his migrant workers as soon as they arrive into the host country and return them only when they go home on leave or on repatriation. Thus it is easy to see how a kafeel can exploit his workers or change the contract conditions at will. Because of their weak position and fear of losing their jobs or even deportation, the migrants choose to submit silently to such injustice and exploitation. Migrants also submit to exploitation because of the huge expanse they have gone to in order to migrate, and the poor socio-economic conditions of their families back home. However bad conditions are in the host country, the situation of an early returnee, who has not had chance to recoup the cost of migration and pay back debts incurred to finance his trip, let alone improve the economic status of his family, may be still worse. Thus, one may conclude that as long as the migrant workers' rights are not properly protected and the kafeel system is not abolished, the great majority of the migrant workers (particularly the unskilled and semi-

skilled) will continue to be vulnerable and potentially exploitable.

One obvious limitation of this study is that it deals with unskilled and semi-skilled Keralite migrants only, thus excluding from the analysis the highly skilled and professional Keralite migrants. Thus, further research on these segments of the Keralite migrant population would be worthwhile, making it possible to compare them and the unskilled and semi-skilled migrants in terms of general socio-economic characteristics, reasons for migration, recruitment methods, working and living conditions in the host society and so on. Moreover, research on other Indian linguistic-regional groups, other Asian and other Arab migrants is needed so that a comprehensive account of the migrants' position in the U.A.E. can be obtained.

The exclusion of female migrants from the analysis was another limitation of this study. Single migrants in the U.A.E. are not exclusively male. Single females and women unaccompanied by their husbands from various Asian and Arab countries are increasingly entering the U.A.E. labour market in search of work. Further research on female migrant workers would certainly provide interesting insights, not only in terms of the differences that might exist between male and female migration, but in terms of the whole issue of international labour migration.

The fact that the in-depth case studies were purposively selected using what is known as "judgement" and

"opportunistic" sampling and "snowball" techniques rather than random sampling may represent another kind of limitation on the findings of the study. Since such techniques select individuals who are available and who are willing to cooperate with the researcher, replication becomes impossible. Nonetheless, there are important compensating benefits from such an approach and, on balance, I believe its use has been vindicated in this case.

Although the study has analysed aspects of the social impact of migration on the migrants and their households, the limited time and resources which were available to the researcher made it very difficult for him to investigate in more detail some of the social and psychological impacts of male migration on the wives and children left behind. More research on these issues would be of great importance in providing a more comprehensive assessment of the impact of migration.

APPENDIX 1

SOME HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS OF LABOUR MIGRATION TO THE ARAB STATES OF THE GULF

Commercial relations between the Arabs along the Gulf and the Indian sub-continent date back several centuries to when the Arab merchants reached the western coast of India and established extensive commercial activities with the sub-continent. Arab traders carried a wide range of products from the Indian sub-continent, up the Euphrates to Babylon and across the desert to Palestine and Egypt (Millar, 1976; Kareem, 1973). Thus the links between the Indian sub-continent and the Arabs of the Gulf pre-date by several centuries, those which were later imposed by the British colonialism.

Indians are no strangers to the the Arab sheikhdoms of the Gulf. Relatively large numbers of immigrants from the Indian sub-continent have been present in the coastal towns of the Gulf since the beginning of the second half of the eighteenth century, if not earlier. Indian immigrants known as the "Banyans" have settled in the towns of Sharjah, Matrah, Musvat and other towns on both sides of the Gulf, where they have engaged in commercial activities, notably as pearl merchants, gold smiths and grain and cloth dealers. It was estimated that nearly 1,000 of the 15,000 inhabitants of Matrah and 1,700 of the 12,000 people living in Muscat, were Indians who migrated from the west coast of the Indian sub-

continent and settled in these towns as merchants, brokers to Arab merchants and agents of any European ship that traded with the region (Al-Qasimi, 1985). With the political penetration of the region by the British, not only was the position of the Indian immigrants as British subjects reinforced, but their numbers increased considerably.

Because of its geographic position on the trade routes between Europe and India and other countries in the east, the Gulf area was the target for several European powers such as the Portuguese, the British, the French and the Dutch. By the second half of the eighteenth century, however, the British East India Company consolidated its control of the Indian sub-continent and after defeating the Arab sea powers - the Omanis in Muscat and Al-Qawasim in Ras al-Khaimah and Sharjah - the British forced the leaders of the Sheikhdoms to enter into protection treaties with them. The Gulf region became a British domain for the next two centuries.

During the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, the British established and maintained an exclusionary colonialism (Hill, 1979:4) and therefore the Arabian coast of the Gulf was almost completely isolated from the outside world. The British by way of the various treaties imposed on the rulers of the sheikhdoms, granted themselves the responsibilities for the defence and foreign affairs of the Sheikhdoms, thus preventing them from entering into any agreement or correspondence with other

foreign powers, except through the British Government, and not allowing any foreign agent to reside in the Sheikhdoms except with the British consent. In this way the Arab sheikhdoms of the Gulf

... continued to be governed by political officers of the British government of India and instead of being a part of the Arab world, was more an extension of the Indian Sub-continent. For example, since there was no local currency, the Indian rupee had become the accepted form of payment, except in the hinterland, where Maria Theresa dollars circulated (Zahlan, 1978:3)

The British used wholesale indentured labour recruited mainly from the Indian sub-continent to work in Britain's plantations and factories. Indians were also brought into the British colonies in Malaya and East Africa and by the first decade of the 20th century they were brought into the Arab Sheikhdoms in the Gulf to act as the functionaries of the colonial administration (Sen, 1986:235).

The destruction of the Qawasim's and Omani's commercial fleets had undermined the commercial activities of the indigenous merchants on the one hand and reinforced the position of the Indian merchants on the other. Not only were the Indian merchants powerful in terms of their business capacity, but they were also accorded special privileges as British subjects (Al-Tamimi, 1983:288; Zahlan, 1978:xiii). Although the British did not directly interfere with the traditional socio-political organization of the Sheikhdoms, they often interfered in favour of the Indian community which was the largest foreign community in the region. The

effect of all this was that Indians not only had the largest share of the foreign trade of the Sheikhdoms along the coast of the Gulf (Zahlan, 1978:3) but also controlled internal economic activities. They financed the agricultural activities in Oman, and the pearling and slaving industries in the other Sheikhdoms (Al-Tamimi, 1983:288). As a matter of fact, the Indian merchants in some of the Arab towns of the Gulf were running and administrating some of the local departments. In Muscat, for example, the customs department was farmed out to a rich Indian merchant at a rent of 180,000 Maria Theresa dollars (Al-Qasimi, 1986).

In short, during the British occupation of the Arab Sheikhdoms of the Gulf, the area was wide open for the Indians who were willing to establish any business in the area. The local rulers did not objectd to the Indians who migrated to these Sheikhdoms in relatively large numbers and establised themselves as businessmen, as long as they paid whatever taxes there were. Taxes levied on the merchants and traders formed one of the main sources of income for the rulers of these Sheikhdoms. This "laissez faire" policy encouraged thousand of wealthy Indians to venture in these Sheikhdoms. In 1840, for example, about 2,000 Indian merchants migrated to Muscat and Mutrah (Al-Tamimi, 1983:288). Other Indians who were not so wealthy also ventured in these Sheikhdoms, where they succeeded in establishing themselves in small scale businesses, especially in restaurants and coffee shops, selling sweets, pastries and other food items imported from India. In time,

these Indian businessmen, petty traders and small shop owners became employers of their relatives and friends from India.

The geo-political importance of the Gulf region increased even more with the discovery of substantial reserves of oil in the beginning of the present century. After the discovery of oil in Bahrain in 1932 and the award of the Saudi oil concession to an American company (the Standard Oil Company of California (SOCAL)) the British government sought to control all remaining concessions in the area under its influence by channeling all concessions to British-owned or British-controlled companies.

With the discovery of oil, the relationship between the Arab Sheikhdoms and the British began to take a new form. The new relationship was a result of a one sided political and commercial policy dictated by the British. This was clearly stated in the Political Agent's view as to how the British should deal with the Arab state of the Gulf:

Let us make it perfectly clear that when we say we want a thing we are going to get it ... and without undue delay; and that obstructive tactics do not pay ... We certainly do not want to administer their disgusting territories and people, but if they happen to be on the air route or there is oil underground they have to behave (India Office Records L/P&S/12/3747:PZ 1724/39, quoted in Zahlan, 1980:67).

What concerns us here, however, is the effect of the discovery of oil in the area and the nascent oil industry, on the region's labour market and labour migration to the

Arab Sheikhdoms of the Gulf. The oil companies relied heavily on non-local labour force for skilled and semi-skilled manual and clerical work. These were mainly recruited from the Indian sub-continent. In Bahrain, for example, the Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPCO) started to import labour from the Indian sub-continent as early as 1935. In that year, BAPCO employed forty-five skilled and semi-skilled Indians. In 1936, BAPCO needed some 250 British Indians of all skills for the refinery construction programme, but it was confronted with the provisions of the Indian Emigration Act which made the export of unskilled Indian labour illegal. Therefore, BAPCO was willing to employ any Indian who arrived in Bahrain without having gone through the proper channels and to give contracts acceptable to the Protectors of Emigrants in Bombay. In this way, BAPCO was prepared, not only to employ Indians, but also "to take on the responsibility of, and pay guarantees for, illegal (Indian) immigrants" (Seccombe, 1983:7).

The number of skilled and semi-skilled Indian employees locally hired by BAPCO reached 236 by October 1937 and the immigration of the accompanying dependants increased significantly. During this period, the employment policy of BAPCO was controlled by the Political Agent of Bahrain who desired to promote the employment of Indians over Iranians who were regarded as an instrument of Iran's claim for sovereignty over Bahrain. Thus, the number of Indians registered in Bahrain increased from 450 in 1930 to 1,550 in 1938 and their activities, too, increased and diversified.

Their commercial activities were illustrated by the fact that at this point in time there were 215 shops in Manama market owned by Indian merchants and traders and the Indian community was large enough for the British to consider the establishment of an Indian primary school for their children.

As Table 1 indicates, Indians dominated the monthly paid labour force of BAPCO in 1941. They formed over 67 per cent of the total monthly paid employees, whereas Iraqis (the only non-local Arabs employed by BAPCO) formed only slightly more than one per cent.

TABLE 1
BAPCO MONTHLY PAID (Rs. 215-475) LABOUR 1948

NATIONALITY	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEE
INDIAN	238
PAKISTANI	15
PORTUGESE INDIAN	18
IRAQI	4
BAHRAINI	51
IRANIAN	3
OTHERS	5
TOTAL	354

Source: Seccombe, 1983:10

A similar situation existed in the Sheikhdome of Qatar. At its early stage, the Petroleum Development (Qatar) depended on labour imported from the Indian sub-continent.

Although Qataris and Bahrainis were employed in large numbers, they were concentrated in unskilled jobs and were largely hired on a daily basis. Indians and Pakistanis were mainly skilled and semi-skilled, employed on a monthly paid basis. In 1948 they formed more than 47 per cent of the monthly paid labour. This proportion increased to more than 77 per cent in 1951 (Seccombe, 1983:12).

Like the other Arab Sheikhdoms in the Gulf, Kuwait had a strong commercial relationship with the Indian sub-continent, long before oil was discovered. By 1936, the Indian community, (particularly the merchants) in Kuwait was large and economically powerful that the Sheikh of Kuwait expressed to the British his desire to keep Indian traders out of Kuwait. He feared that because of the Indian traders' ability to live more cheaply than the Kuwaitis on the one hand, and their superior business capacity on the other, many Kuwaiti merchants might be driven out of business. The British responded to the Sheikh's desire by proposing to control the influx of Indians into Kuwait and limit the numbers of those entering the Sheikhdome. They also decreed that no Indian could establish any business without an equal partner of Kuwaiti nationality. These proposals, however, did not materialise. The Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) continued to recruit the labour it needed from the Indian sub-continent. In 1948 there were 4,053 Indians employed by KOC, of whom about 81 per cent were skilled and semi-skilled workers (Seccombe, 1983:15)

In short, the relations between the Arab Sheikhdoms of the Gulf and the Indian sub-continent pre-date the links imposed by the British exclusionary colonialism. Migrants from the Indian sub-continent have been present in the Gulf region in relatively large numbers in many of the Arab towns along the western coast of the Gulf since the first half of the 18th century if not earlier. When the British concluded various agreements and treaties with the Arab Sheikhdoms by the first decade of the 20th century, the whole region became a British domain. The Indian communities in the region increased even more as the area became wide open to them and their position was reinforced and their activities had diversified due to the special privileges accorded to them as British subjects. With the discovery of oil, the nascent oil companies depended heavily on labour imported from the Indian sub-continent. Large numbers of skilled and semi-skilled Indians were recruited and employed in the oil companies owned or controlled by the British. The employment policies of the oil company was influenced by the British who desired to promote the employment of Indians over those of other foreign nationalities. Thus, it is safe to conclude with Seccombe that

... the recent 'growth' of immigration from the Indian sub-continent is not a new phenomenon but the recrudescence of tradition of migration dating back to the 1930s (and before) and encouraged by the rapid exhaustion of Arab labour suppliers (1983:16).

APPENDIX 2

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

CASE NO.	RESPONDENTS' NAME	DATE: / /
		DURATION:

SECTION A: GENERAL BACKGROUND

A1. How old are you?

- | | |
|-------------------|-----|
| 1) Under 20 Years | [] |
| 2) 21 - 25 Years | [] |
| 3) 26 - 30 Years | [] |
| 4) 31 - 35 Years | [] |
| 5) 36 - 40 Years | [] |
| 6) 41 - 45 Years | [] |
| 7) 46 - 60 Years | [] |
| 8) Over 60 Years | [] |

A2. What is your religion?

- | | |
|--------------------|-----|
| 1) Islam | [] |
| 2) Christianity | [] |
| 3) Hinduism | [] |
| 4) Other - specify | [] |

A3. What is your marital status?

- | | |
|--------------|-----|
| 1) Single | [] |
| 2) Married | [] |
| 3) Divorced | [] |
| 4) Separated | [] |
| 5) Widower | [] |

A4. What is your educational level?

- 1) No formal education []
- 2) Primary school []
- 3) Secondary school []
- 4) College education
(with no degree) []
- 5) Degree holder []

A5. Do you speak any language other than Malayalam?

- 1) Hindi []
- 2) English []
- 3) Arabic []
- 4) Others - specify []

A6. Did you have any vocational training before coming to the U.A.E.?

- 1) Yes - specify []
- 2) No []

A7. Did you have any work experience before coming to the U.A.E.?

- 1) Yes - specify []
- 2) No []

A8. What was your employment status before coming to the U.A.E.?

- 1) Unemployed []
- 2) Employed in wage /salary
employment []
- 3) Self employed []

A9. What was your occupation before coming to the U.A.E.?

[]

A10. How much was your monthly earning on the eve of migration?

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| 1) No earnings | [] |
| 2) Less than 100 Rupees | [] |
| 3) 100 to 250 Rupees | [] |
| 4) 251 to 500 Rupees | [] |
| 5) 501 to 1,000 Rupees | [] |
| 6) Over 1,000 Rupees | [] |

A11. What is your place of origin? Specify

- | | |
|----------------------|-----|
| District | [] |
| Taluk (sub-district) | [] |
| City | [] |
| Town | [] |
| Village | [] |

A12. How many members are there in your household?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| 1) 5 members or less | [] |
| 2) 6 to 10 members | [] |
| 3) 11 to 15 members | [] |
| 4) 16 members or more | [] |

A13. Who lives in your household?

- | | Relationship
to the migrant | Sex | Age | Job if
employed | Dependency |
|----|--------------------------------|-----|-----|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 2 | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 3 | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 4 | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 5 | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 6 | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 7 | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 8 | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 9 | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 10 | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |

A14. What was your status within your household prior to migration?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| 1) Head of household | [] |
| 2) Other income earning member | [] |
| 3) Dependent | [] |

A15. Does your family own any cultivable land?

- | | |
|--------|-------|
| 1) Yes | [.] |
| 2) No | [] |

A16. How much land does your family own? []

A17. What was your household's annual income on the eve of migration?

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| 1) 5,000 Rupees or less | [] |
| 2) 6,000 to 10,000 Rupees | [] |
| 3) 11,000 to 15,000 Rupees | [] |
| 4) 16,000 to 20,000 Rupees | [] |
| 5) 21,000 to 25,000 Rupees | [] |
| 6) 26,000 to 30,000 Rupees | [] |
| 7) Over 30,000 Rupees | [] |

A18. What was the approximate value of the total assets of your household just before migration?

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 1) 50,000 Rupees or less | [] |
| 2) 51,000 to 100,000 Rs. | [] |
| 3) 101,000 to 200,000 Rs. | [] |
| 4) Over 200,000 Rs. | [] |

SECTION B: MOVING TO THE U.A.E

B1. When did you come to the U.A.E.? []

B2. Which of the following do you regard as the most important reason for you to seek employment abroad?

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1) Lack of employment opportunity at home | [] |
| 2) Discharge of family responsibilities | [] |
| 3) Accumulation of savings to raise living standards | [] |
| 4) Capital accumulation for investment purposes | [] |

- 5) Travel and experience []
- 6) Other reasons - specify []

B3. How many of your household's members moved to work in the U.A.E.?

- 1) before you []
- 2) after you []

B4. How many of your relatives moved to work in the U.A.E.?

- 1) before you []
- 2) after you? []

B5. How many of your friends moved to work in the U.A.E.?

- 1) before you []
- 2) after you []

B6. How did you come to know about the U.A.E.?

- 1) Through relatives []
- 2) Through friends []
- 3) Through recruiting agents []
- 4) Through newspapers []
- 5) Other - specify []

B7. How did you secure entry to the U.A.E.?

- 1) By the help of a relative []
- 2) By the help of a friend []
- 3) Through a recruiting agent []
- 4) Direct application to employer in the U.A.E. []
- 5) Others - specify []

B8. How long did you have to wait between recruitment and arrival to the U.A.E.?

- 1) Less than 6 months []
- 2) 6 to 12 months []
- 3) 13 to 18 months []
- 4) 19 to 24 months []
- 5) 25 to 30 months []
- 6) Over 30 months []

B9. How much money did you spend to come to the U.A.E.? []

B10. How do you rate the cost of moving to the U.A.E.?

- 1) Inexpensive []
- 2) Reasonable []
- 3) Expensive []
- 4) Very expensive []

B11. How did you get the money to come to the U.A.E.?

- 1) Personal savings []
- 2) Parents and other households' members []
- 3) Borrowing from relatives []
- 4) Borrowing from friends []
- 5) Borrowing from banks and money lenders []
- 6) Other - specify []

B12. Have you helped anyone to come to the U.A.E.?

- 1) A household member []
- 2) A relative []
- 3) A friend []

B13. How did you help him / them? []

B14. Have you helped any of your friends to come to the U.A.E.?

- 1) Yes []
- 2) No []

SECTION C: WORKING CONDITIONS

C1. Did you secure a job in the U.A.E before coming?

- 1) No job was secured []
- 2) Job secured through formal contract []
- 3) Promised a job upon arrival but no contract has been made []

C2. Did you receive

- 1) the promised job? []
- 2) a different job? []
- 3) no job? []

C3. By Whom were you first met on arrival to the U.A.E?

- 1) Your employer or his agent []
- 2) Relative []
- 3) Friend []
- 4) Other - specify []

C4. How did you find your first job?

- 1) By the help of relatives []
- 2) By the help of friends []
- 3) Own efforts []
- 4) Other - specify []

C5. How long did it take you to obtain your first job?

- 1) Less than a months []
- 2) 1 to 3 months []
- 3) 4 to 6 months []
- 4) 7 to 9 months []
- 5) 10 to 12 months []
- 6) Over 12 months []

C6. How many jobs have you taken since arrival in the U.A.E.? []

C7. Can you explain why you left your previous job or jobs?

- 1) First job []
- 2) Second job []
- 3) Third job []

C8. Are you employed now?

- 1) Yes []
- 2) No []

C9. Who is your employer?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| 1) The government | [] |
| 2) The private sector | [] |
| 3) Self employed | [] |
| 4) Other - specify | [] |

C10. What is your present job? []

C11. How many hours do you work per day?

- | | |
|-------------------|-----|
| 1) 8 hours | [] |
| 2) 9 to 11 hours | [] |
| 3) 12 to 14 hours | [] |
| 4) Over 14 hours | [] |

C12. Do you have to work on holidays?

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1) Yes - specify | [] |
| 2) No | [] |

C13. Do you get paid for overtime work?

- | | |
|--------|-----|
| 1) Yes | [] |
| 2) No | [] |

C14. Are you happy with your job?

- | | |
|--------|-----|
| 1) Yes | [] |
| 2) No | [] |

C15. If unhappy, why is that?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| 1) Long working hours | [] |
| 2) Small salary | [] |
| 3) Other - specify | [] |

C16. Do you have another job beside your principal one?

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1) Yes - specify | [] |
| 2) No | [] |

SECTION D: ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

D1. How much do you earn from your principal job?

- 1) Less than 1,000 Derhams []
- 2) 1,100 to 1,500 Derhams []
- 3) 1,600 to 2,000 Derhams []
- 4) 2,100 to 2,500 Derhams []
- 5) 2,600 to 3,000 Derhams []
- 6) Over 3,000 Derhams []

D2. How much do you earn from your part time job?

- 1) 100 Derhams []
- 2) 200 Derhams []
- 3) 300 Derhams []
- 4) 400 Derhams []
- 4) 500 Derhams []
- 6) Over 500 Derhams []

D3. How much do you spend every month? []

D4. How much do you spend on housing? []

D5. How much do you spend on food? []

D6. How much do you spend on clothes? []

D7. How much do you spend on transportation
and other miscellaneous items? []

D8. Do you send money to Kerala?

- 1) Yes []
- 2) No []

D9. How often do you send money home?

- 1) Every month []
- 2) Every 2 months []
- 3) Every 3 months []
- 4) At irregular intervals []

D10. Which of the following methods do you use to send money back home?

- 1) By bank draft []
- 2) By bank transfer []
- 3) By mail transfer []
- 4) With relatives going home []
- 5) With friends going home []
- 6) Other - specify []

D11. To whom do you send this money?

- 1) Your parents []
- 2) Your spouse []
- 3) Other relatives []
- 4) Direct to your account []
- 5) Other - specify []

D12. How much, on average, do you remit back home per year? []

D13. What happens to these remittances?.....
.....

D14. How much of these remittances is saved? []

D15. Do you save any money here in Abu Dhabi?

- 1) Yes []
- 2) No []

SECTION E: HOUSING CONDITIONS

- E1. Number of rooms in the house []
- E2. Number of kitchens in the house []
- E3. Number of bathrooms in the house []
- E4. Other facilities in the house []

- E5. The rent of the house? []
- E6. How long have you been living in this house? []
- E6. How many people live in this house? []
- E8. How many people live with you in this room? []
- E9. How much is the rent for this room? []

SECTION F: SOCIAL NETWORKS AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

F1. How many of your relatives live with you

- 1) in the same house? []
- 2).in the same room? []

F2. How many of your friends live with you

- 1) in the same house? []
- 2).in the same room? []

F3. Do you have other relatives or friends living in

- 1) another room? []
- 2) another house in Abu Dhabi? []
- 3) another city in the U.A.e.? [.]

F4. Do you have any friends from

- 1) the indigenous people? []
- 2) other nationalities? []
- 3) other non Keralite Indians? []
- 4) Keralites not from your home village? []

F5. How many of your present friends do not belong to the same religion as you? []

F6. How often do you visit

- 1) your relatives in Abu Dhabi? []
- 2) your relatives in other cities? []
- 3) your friends in Abu Dhabi? []
- 4) your friends in other cities? []

F7. Do you borrow money from your relatives?

- 1) Yes []
- 2) No [.]

F8. Do you borrow money from your friends?

- 1) Yes []
- 2) No []

F9. Who would you turn to if you had a problem?

- 1) A close relative []
- 2) Any relative []
- 3) A close friend []
- 4) Other - specify []

F9. Are you a member of any Indian or Keralite clubs or associations?

- 1) Yes - specify []
- 2) No []

F10. What do you useually do in your free time?

- 1) Visit relatives or friends []
- 2) Attend social or sports club []
- 3) Go shopping []
- 4) Other - specify []

F11. Do you Communicate with relatives in Kerala?

- 1) Yes []
- 2) No []

F12. How do you communicate with them?

- 1) Telephone []
- 2) Letters []
- 3) Others - specify []

F13. How often do you communicate with them? []

F14. How often do you visit Kerala?

- 1) Every year []
- 2) Every two years []
- 3) Every three years []
- 4) On irregular basis []
- 5) Not visited Keral since migration - why? []

APPENDIX 3

DISTRICTWISE PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF AGRARIAN HOUSEHOLDS CLASSIFIED BY TYPE OF LAND RELATIONS (1966-67)

DISTRICTS	TOTAL	OWNER CULTI- VATORS	TENANTS	KUDIKI- DAPPU	LAND- LORDS
TRIVANDRUM	100	88.5	2.0	8.2	1.3
QUILON	100	87.6	4.4	6.2	1.8
ALLEPPEY	100	56.6	14.6	26.7	2.1
KOTTAYAM	100	50.0	34.6	14.1	1.3
ERNAKULAM	100	35.7	43.5	17.7	3.1
TRICHUR	100	6.3	73.7	16.6	3.4
PALGHAT	100	12.5	78.8	6.4	2.3
KOZHIKODE	100	7.2	86.7	4.0	2.1
CANNANORE	100	24.1	58.1	13.9	3.9
STATE	100	40.6	44.9	12.2	2.3

Source: Government of Kerala, Land Reforms Survey, 1966- 67. Report. Bureau of Economic and Statistics (Trivandrum 1967), p. 50.

APPENDIX 4

DISTRIBUTION OF THE MUSLIMS ACCORDING TO OCCUPATION (1968)

OCCUPATION	%
Engineers	0.01
Subordinate Engineering personnel	0.03
Scientists	0.01
Physicians and Surgeons (Allopathic)	0.02
Physicians-Indigeonous	0.18
Subordinate Medical personnel	0.11
College Teachers	0.02
School Teachers	1.08
Legal profession	0.04
-do- Subordinate	0.02
Other Technical workers	0.39
Adminstrative and Managerial	0.27
Clerical workers	0.93
Traders	1.04
Salesmen	16.48
Farmers	20.79
Farm workers	32.67
Miners and Quarrymen	0.88
Transportation	2.86
Craftsmen	10.17
Service section	5.47
Unskilled workers	5.54

Source: P. Abdul Kareem, "Causes and Consequences of Educational Backwardness of Muslims in Kerala", 1987, p. 82.

APPENDIX 5

SECTORAL CONTRIBUTION TO NET DOMESTIC PRODUCT OF KERALA (IN PERCENTAGE)

SECTOR	YEARS			
	1970-71	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85
PRIMARY	49.3	38.9	40.5	40.2
SECONDARY	16.3	21.7	20.3	19.6
TERTIARY:				
1. Transport, Communication and Trade	17.7	19.3	18.6	18.6
2. Finance and Real Estate	3.5	6.1	6.8	7.7
3. Community and Personal Services	13.2	14.0	13.8	13.9
Sub total	34.4	39.4	39.2	40.2
TOTAL NDP	100	100	100	100

Source: Adapted from Government of Kerala, Economic Review (Trivandrum, 1985), Table 2.2, P. 9.

APPENDIX 6

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AS BETWEEN THE EMPLOYED AND THE UNEMPLOYED (1971)

ITEMS	NO. OF PERSONS	%
POPULATION	21,347,375	100
EMPLOYED	6,216,489	29.20
1. Agriculturists	1,106,663	5.18
2. Agricultural labourer	1,908,114	8.94
3. Animal husbandry, forest, fishing, plantation crops	434,829	2.04
4. Mining and stone cutting	29,886	0.14
5. Industrial production, processing, repairs, etc.		
a) Cottage industries	265,892	1.25
b) Excluding cottage industries	711,962	3.24
6. Construction	107,449	0.50
7. Commerce and trade	565,643	2.65
8. Transport, storage and communications	242,089	1.13
9. Other spheres of work	843,927	3.95
10. Those who do not work	15,130,916	70.88

Source: Final Population Totals, 1971, Director of Census Operations, Trivandrum. Sighted in K.C. Sankaranarayanan and V. Karunakaran, Kerala Economy (New Delhi, 1985), p. 21.

APPENDIX 7

MIGRANTS BY YEAR OF MIGRATION BY COSTS INCURRED (IN 1,000 RUPEES)

YEAR OF MIGRATION	COSTS INCURRED								TOTAL
	LESS THAN 1	1 TO 5	5.1 TO 10	10.1 TO 15	15.5 TO 20	20.1 TO 25	25.1 TO 30	MOR THAN 30	
1966	3	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	8
67	4	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	10
68	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
69	2	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
1970	4	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	8
71	4	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	9
72	1	12	—	—	—	—	—	—	13
73	—	20	—	—	4	1	—	—	25
74	—	—	1	—	22	10	—	—	33
75	—	—	1	17	8	3	1	—	30
76	—	—	1	21	11	—	—	—	33
77	—	—	5	21	5	1	1	—	33
78	—	—	—	38	12	1	6	—	57
79	—	—	6	25	14	4	—	1	50
1980	—	—	5	19	13	5	1	—	43
81	—	—	4	23	7	2	3	—	39
82	—	—	3	23	7	4	4	—	41
83	—	—	25	47	12	6	5	3	98
84	—	—	13	26	32	2	10	3	86
85	—	—	7	45	20	5	1	1	79
86	—	—	14	27	24	5	—	—	70
87	—	—	13	57	19	10	5	—	104
88	—	—	21	76	33	11	5	2	148
TOTAL	20	58	119	465	243	70	42	10	1027

APPENDIX 8

MIGRANTS BY WAITING PERIOD BETWEEN RECRUITMENT AND MIGRATION ACCORDING TO THE YEAR OF MIGRATION (IN PERCENTAGE)*

YEAR OF MIGRATION	WAITING PERIOD BETWEEN RECRUITMENT AND MIGRATION (IN MONTHS)						TOTAL
	LESS THAN 6	7 TO 12	13 TO 18	19 TO 24	25 TO 30	MORE THAN 30	
1966	87.5	12.5	—	—	—	—	100
1967	100	—	—	—	—	—	100
1968	75.0	25.0	—	—	—	—	100
1969	100	—	—	—	—	—	100
1970	87.5	—	12.5	—	—	—	100
SUB TOTAL	91.7	5.5	2.8	—	—	—	100
1971	66.7	11.1	22.2	—	—	—	100
1972	53.8	30.8	7.7	7.7	—	—	100
1973	56.0	24.0	8.0	12.0	—	—	100
1974	57.6	15.2	21.1	6.1	—	—	100
1975	53.3	26.7	16.7	3.3	—	—	100
SUB TOTAL	56.4	21.8	15.4	6.4	—	—	100
1976	36.4	39.4	24.2	—	—	—	100
1977	30.3	36.4	21.2	12.1	—	—	100
1978	36.8	40.4	17.5	5.3	—	—	100
1979	20.0	36.0	34.0	10.0	—	—	100
1980	16.3	37.2	44.2	—	2.3	—	100
SUB TOTAL	27.8	38.0	28.2	5.6	0.4	—	100
1981	5.1	38.5	46.1	10.3	—	—	100
1982	4.9	31.7	41.5	19.5	2.4	—	100
1983	11.2	33.7	35.7	11.2	8.2	—	100
1984	7.0	27.9	36.0	16.3	12.8	—	100
1985	6.3	21.5	31.6	15.2	17.7	7.6	100
SUB TOTAL	7.6	29.7	36.7	14.3	9.9	1.7	100
1986	7.1	21.4	27.1	18.6	18.6	7.1	100
1987	3.8	26.0	29.8	21.2	15.4	3.8	100
1988	4.1	27.7	33.1	20.9	10.1	4.1	100
SUB TOTAL	4.7	25.8	30.7	20.5	13.7	4.7	100
% OF TOTAL	19.1	28.5	29.6	13.0	7.7	2.0	100

* Total may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

APPENDIX 9

WAITING PERIOD BETWEEN ARRIVAL IN THE U.A.E. AND FIRST EMPLOYMENT ACCORDING TO THE YEAR OF MIGRATION (percentage)

YEAR OF MIGRATION	WAITING PERIOD (IN MONTHS)							TOTAL
	LESS THAN 1	1 TO 3	4 TO 6	7 TO 9	10 TO 12	MORE THAN 12	NEVER WORKED	
1966	13.5	12.5	37.5	25.0	12.5	—	—	100
1967	10.0	20.0	40.0	20.0	10.0	—	—	100
1968	—	25.0	75.0	—	—	—	—	100
1969	33.3	—	33.3	16.7	16.7	—	—	100
1970	12.5	12.5	37.5	25.0	12.5	—	—	100
SUB TOTAL	13.9	13.9	41.7	19.4	11.1	—	—	100
1971	22.2	22.2	33.3	11.1	11.1	—	—	100
1972	23.0	46.2	30.8	—	—	—	—	100
1973	36.0	16.0	20.0	20.0	8.0	4.0	—	100
1974	33.3	24.2	21.2	12.1	6.1	3.0	—	100
1975	43.3	33.3	20.0	3.3	—	—	—	100
SUB TOTAL	34.5	27.3	22.7	9.1	4.5	1.8	—	100
1976	36.4	27.3	24.2	12.1	—	—	—	100
1977	33.3	21.2	30.3	15.2	—	—	—	100
1978	28.1	21.1	36.8	10.5	3.5	—	—	100
1979	22.0	18.0	40.0	14.0	4.0	2.0	—	100
1980	18.6	18.6	51.2	—	11.6	—	—	100
SUB TOTAL	26.9	20.8	37.5	10.2	4.2	0.5	—	100
1981	15.4	12.8	25.6	28.2	10.3	7.7	—	100
1982	9.8	14.6	—	36.6	22.0	17.1	—	100
1983	3.1	5.1	33.7	37.8	14.3	6.1	—	100
1984	—	2.3	34.9	30.2	22.1	10.5	—	100
1985	—	—	32.9	29.1	22.8	15.2	—	100
SUB TOTAL	3.8	5.2	28.9	32.7	18.7	10.8	—	100
1986	—	—	30.0	31.4	27.1	8.6	2.9	100
1987	—	—	27.0	46.2	22.1	1.9	2.9	100
1988	—	—	—	—	—	—	100	100
SUB TOTAL	—	—	15.2	21.7	13.0	2.5	47.5	100
TOTAL	11.1	9.5	26.2	21.5	12.1	4.7	14.9	100

APPENDIX 10

MIGRANTS BY OCCUPATION IN THE HOST COUNTRY ACCORDING TO RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION (IN PERCENTAGE)

TYPE OF OCCUPATION	RELIGIOUS GROUPS			TOTAL
	MUSLIM	HINDU	CHRISTIAN	
Care taker	18.9	14.2	16.7	18.2
Office assistant	9.3	9.2	—	9.1
Labourer	22.1	33.3	16.7	23.7
Domestic helper	5.6	—	—	4.7
Gardener	8.3	2.5	—	7.4
Salesman	9.6	12.5	8.3	10.0
Waiter	4.2	4.2	16.7	4.4
Fish cleaner	3.7	—	—	3.1
Fishmonger	1.7	—	—	1.4
Petty trader	2.5	1.7	—	2.4
TOTAL UNSKILLED	86.0	77.5	58.3	84.4
Clerk / Typist	1.8	8.3	16.7	3.0
Driver / Machine operator	2.7	6.7	8.3	3.3
Fisherman	1.3	—	—	1.1
Painter	3.0	3.3	8.3	3.1
Butcher	1.1	—	—	0.9
Plumber	1.3	0.8	—	1.2
Barber	1.3	—	—	1.1
TOTAL SEMI-SKILLED	12.4	19.2	33.3	13.7
Tailor	0.3	—	—	0.2
Carpenter	0.7	0.8	—	0.7
Photographer	0.3	1.7	—	0.5
Electrician	0.3	0.8	8.3	0.5
TOTAL SKILLED	1.6	3.3	8.3	1.9
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

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