

The Phenomenon of Peasantry In-migration in Attapady, Kerala

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Abstract

Human migration is a universal phenomenon and the volume of migration has been rapidly increasing. Among the various types of migration, peasantry migration is unique. An in-depth analysis of the complex phenomenon of migration with its history is very significant in several disciplines. This paper is based on a survey of literature on the subject. The major topics covered include the theoretical background of migration, peasantry migration trends in Kerala and the history of migration to the Attapady tribal area in Kerala. The indigenous population has been reduced to a minority and they have been marginalised. This has generated tension between the tribal society and the migrants. The paper further discusses some of the determinants and dynamics of migration.

Keywords

migration, peasantry migration, Attapady, indigenous people, environment

Introduction

The movement of living beings in search of a better environment is a natural phenomenon and man is no exception (Cherunilam, 1987). Human migration is as old as human history. The worldwide distribution of the human race at present has evolved as a result of responses to the environment and the complex pattern of migration. According to a report by the World Bank on migration and remittance, the total number of immigrants in 2011 was 215.8 million or 3.2 per cent of the world population (World Bank, 2011).

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India is the second largest source of migrants with 11.8 million after Mexico with 12.9 million (Rediff.com News, 2012). The Census of India 2001 shows that 41 million (13%) people in India were interstate migrants. According to the Census of India in 2011, 5.1 million (1.6%) migrated to India from outside the country. The above statistics show the high incidence of migration nationally and internationally.

The Attapady region in Kerala is a showcase for the most vibrant and yet conflicting social and cultural ethos. Tribes alone once inhabited Attapady, but now it has become the recipient of waves of migrants from the plains to the east and west of Attapady with the migrations eventually making the tribes a minority (43%). The tribal population belongs to the Irula, Muduga and Kurumba communities and the non-tribes consist of migrants with different linguistic and religious backgrounds from different parts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The pace of migration increase was about 800 persons per year in 1951-61 which increased to 2,000 persons during 1961-71. Up to the present, there is still a steady increase of migrants (AHADS, 2007).

The influx of migrants to Attapady at a high rate and the tribal land alienation have created imbalances and unrest among the tribal communities. The laws relating to land, forest and indigenous people by the Central and the State Governments often put migrants on the defensive. Often the authorities and the public fail to understand the problems faced by the migrants who came in search of their livelihood, and their contributions to developing the area. Interstate issues, especially the river water sharing between Tamil Nadu and Kerala, had repercussions at Attapady on the relationships between the migrants from the two states. Considering all these diverse aspects, there is a need of an in-depth study of available literature on the phenomenon of peasantry in-migration in Attapady. This will help to have a realistic understanding of different communities there.

The first section of the paper deals with the conceptual background of migration from a theoretical framework. The historical perspective on migration is presented in the second section with special reference to the Attapady Block. In the third section an overview of some of the determinants and dynamics of migration are discussed.

The Conceptual Background of Migration

People migrate in search of food, to escape from natural calamities, threats of enemies, to seek adventure and for the lack of social and economic opportunities (Chaudary and Padma, 2007). Migration is a process through which people move from a permanent place of residence to another more or less permanent one for a substantial period of time. It leads to the redistribution of population at the place of origin and the destination.

Migration: Meaning and Types

The definitions vary according to the differences in the nature, scope and purpose of the study or discussion. According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, to migrate means to move from one place, town or country to another. A scholarly understanding of migration informs us that human migration is an adjustment mechanism occurring across space and time to compensate for the geo-temporal differential in the distribution of resources. Migration is supposed to link the area of origin and the area of destination by the transfer of population (Gayathri, 2007).

Several types of migration have been distinguished by sociologists and demographers based on various factors like time, distance, boundaries, decision, number and volume. Internal migration is migration within the country whereas external migration is between countries. Under internal migration the terms in-migration and out-migration are used referring to migration within a particular area inside the country (Sharma, 1997).

Sources of Data and Methods of Measuring Internal Migration

The national Census is the most important source of data concerning internal migration in a country. Such a Census is taken in almost all countries. Sample surveys are the source of direct information on internal migration. They provide information on the characteristics of the migrants, their motives for migration and their attitudes towards migration. The Population Register records residential changes, thus supplying valuable data concerning internal migration (Sharma, 1997).

The methods of measuring internal migration have been classified as direct and indirect. Under direct measures for estimating migration, place of birth, duration of residence, place of last residence and place of residence

at a fixed prior date are taken into consideration. The most important methods under indirect measuring of migration are the vital statistics, the survival ratio method and the migration rate.

The Process of Migration

There are several socio-economic processes in migration such as adaptation, assimilation, acculturation, accommodation, integration, domination, colonisation and exploitation, depending on the context and nature of human encounters (Gregory, 2005). Acculturation is the adoption of the customs and values of the population of the destination.

Assimilation is the integration into the social structure on terms of equality. Absorption is the entry into the productive economic activity. Naturalisation is the acquisition of legal citizenship. When the in-migrants from a particular territory do not assimilate into the new area but retain their customs of origin it is called a colony. When the receiving country is already inhabited, it raises the problem of co-existence between communities. This could be solved by the fusion of the population and the disappearance of recognisable differences, or by the integration of one population into the other.

Over the past one million years humanity has emerged as a consequence of global colonisation. Indigenous people were very much affected by the forces of colonisation, modernisation and globalisation. They were driven from their ancestral land, cut off from their traditional way of life, and were forced to integrate with the dominant group. The outsiders, with their astute skills and capitalistic mind set, often exploit them.

Theories/Approaches on Migration

There were a number of theories and approaches previously developed for analysing the factors of migration. A brief critical review of the major theories and approaches is presented here.

Radical changes to the institutional set up and occupational patterns brought about by the Industrial Revolution was the starting point for several streams of migration. People started flocking to the urban centres after abandoning agriculture as their main occupation. Significantly, the 'town-ward' migration in search of non-agricultural occupations still continues to be the main pattern of migration in all countries. Such migration involving

vertical mobility gained momentum in all countries during the process of industrialisation. In all the developed countries, the agricultural sector has been relieved of the pressure of population as a result of rural to urban migration.

Different patterns of migration have existed on different occasions. The trans-Atlantic migration from Europe to America, the 'brain drain' pattern of migration of highly trained professionals, the Industrial Revolution related to the plantation labour indenture system, and the post-World War II 'guest workers', are a few examples of migration (Joseph, 1989).

According to Lee (1966), the decision to migrate and the process of migration are determined by the factors associated with the area of origin, destination, intervening obstacles and personal factors. In every area there are countless factors which hold people in the area or attract people to it, and there are others which tend to repel them. The effect of these forces varies from person to person depending on age, experience, education, skill and sex. He further introduces the concept of intervening obstacles like distance, cost of transport, and restrictive immigration laws which also tend to exert different influences on people. Therefore he concedes that the actual decision to migrate is never conceptually rational. The actual volume of migration depends on the degree of diversity of the area, occupation and size of the population. Migration tends to increase with time and with the state of progress of the country. Although the theory provides a general scheme of a push and pull combination, it does not throw much light on which of the plus and minus factors are more important to the emergence of different patterns of migration.

In the Lewis-Fei-Gustav Model (Lewis, 1954), migration was linked with the process of economic development. According to the model, the economy consists of two sectors: the rural subsistence sector and the modern urban sector. The model focuses on the transfer of the low productivity surplus labour from the subsistence sector to the modern sector as a result of the employment expansion in the modern sector. Expansion depends on the reinvestment of the entire profit accruing to the modern sector. There is no reason to believe that the capitalist sector would expand in such a way as to absorb the entire volume of the surplus labour force of the subsistence sector.

On account of the shortcomings of the neo-classical equilibrium model, authors such as Portes (1997) and Balan (1981) proposed an alternative

historical structural perspective approach. According to this approach, any study on migration must necessarily probe into the pressures and counterpressures, both internal and external, to the economy which cause changes in the organisation of production. It is the historical process which determines the availability of labour and effects changes to the migration flows. The structural transformation of the social setup rather than individual motives assumes priority in any stream. Migration becomes a class phenomenon where the unit of analysis should be the stream rather than the individual unit. Any study on migration thus calls for a broader theory of socio-economic and political changes in which migration is only a part. The historical structural perspective pays scant attention to the individual factors (Joseph, 1989). The foregoing survey gives an overall picture of various theories and approaches to the phenomenon of migration.

The History of Migration

The settled life of man started around 10,000 years ago. The growth of the world population in history was 5 million in 8,000 B.C., 300 million in the Christian Era, 500 million in 1650 A.D., 1 billion in 1850, two billion in 1930 and 8 billion in 2012. There were high fertility and high mortality rates (3.5% each) during the Agrarian Stage. However, during the Industrial Stage there was a population expansion. Regarding the distribution of population, three fourths of the world population lived in just 15 per cent of the land. The distribution of the density of population at global level per sq.km in 1980 was Asia 108, Europe 101, South America 21, Africa 20 and North America 14. The Indian average population density was about 324. The factors affecting the distribution of population are the physical factors of climate, land form, soil fertility and minerals, and the socio-cultural factors such as the type of economy, political ideology, technological development and social attitudes (Surender, 2007).

In pre-agricultural times, group migration was very common with no disruption of their social relationships. With the emergence of nations and states, fixed abodes were there. There was a significant change in the social life of man due to the changes in the nature of migration.

In pre-modern times, migration was present in Africa, Euro-Asia and then in Australia and America. During the period of colonisation and Turkish expansion, high levels of migration took place. Modern migration began in the 18th century through a labour migratory form during

industrialisation. Refugee migration was very common in most countries. In the South Asian sub-continent, migration took place in India, Sri Lanka, Burma and Malaysia in the European colonies, especially in the British plantations.

Migration in Kerala

Kerala, one of the smallest states in the Indian sub-continent, nestles in the shadow of the Western Ghats mountain range in the south western corner of India. The length of the State is 360 miles and the breadth is 60-70 miles. The state has about 4 per cent of the total Indian population, occupying one per cent of the total Indian land mass. Kerala has small ports of trade with less urbanisation and industrialisation, and mostly depends upon cash crop exports. Nearly 96 per cent of the people of the state are Malayalees, 2.4 per cent Tamil speaking and 1.2 per cent speak Kannada and other languages. Over 93 per cent of Malayalees live in Kerala and the remaining 7 per cent outside the state (Joseph, 1989). Previously there was very limited movement of people to other states because of the particular geography, with mountains and rivers and no roads and communication systems. From the 2nd to the 12th centuries, Kerala was under Chera rule, and during the medieval period power was with the Feudal Independent Chiefs. At the beginning of the 18th century there were the Princely States of Zamorin at Calicut, Kochi and Travancore.

From 1941 onwards Kerala became an out-migrant State. It was on account of industrialisation in metropolitan areas, recruitment by the defence services, and the need for professionals in West Asia, Africa and Europe. The Malayalee population outside Kerala was only 30,000 in 1941, whereas in 1951 it was 3.4 million. Net out-migration was 0.11 during 1941-51 which increased to 0.31 in 1981-91. In 1980 there were 508,000 international out-migrants from Kerala of which 90 per cent were in west Asian Gulf Countries (Joseph, 1989).

Peasantry Migration from Travancore to Malabar

Previously the whole of the Western Ghats area of Kerala was known as Malabar. The Princely States of Travancore and Kochi were in existence prior to British colonisation. It was during the British period that they defeated Tipu Sultan and by 1800 had made the northern area their Malabar District under the Madras Presidency.

One of the important patterns of migration which originated in Kerala was the peasant migration from Travancore to Malabar. The peasants of Travancore started migration to Malabar from the 1920s in search of wastelands suitable for extending cultivation. Migratory movement was unique for various reasons. When the in-migrants from Travancore were pouring into Malabar, a large number of people were moving from Malabar to other parts of India. The movement had very few parallels in India except possibly the migration of peasants from Bengal to the interior parts of Assam during the early decades of twentieth century. The bulk of the migrants were mainly from the midland region of the northern part of Travancore and most belonged to the Syrian Christian community.

Push and Pull Factors for Malabar Migration

At Travancore, the *Pattom Proclamation* of 1865 promoted land as a saleable product. The encouragement of farmers by the British to cultivate cash crops, the population pressure on agricultural land, the Anti-Christian attitude by the Travancore Government rulers, the World Economic Depression in the 1930s and the resultant poverty pushed the people into migration. The pulling factors at the destination of Malabar were the availability of fertile land at cheaper rates in the context of the Nair Bill in the mid 1920s, the *Madras Marumakkathayam Act* and the *Madras Namboodiri Act* in 1933, and the Grow More Food Policy utilising the waste and forest lands (Varghese, 2010).

Unlike the various patterns of migration from the rest of India, the peasant migration from Travancore exhibited certain distinguishing characteristics. Firstly, it was purely a voluntary type in which there was no support from government. Secondly, the purpose of migration was for the reclamation of waste land. Thirdly, the overwhelming majority of the migrants from the rest of India belonged to the lowest strata. In sharp contrast to this, the peasant migrants enjoyed a respectable place in the social hierarchy of Travancore (Joseph, 1989).

Migration to the Attapady Block

Physical Features of the Attapady Area

Attapady is an area classified as the Integrated Tribal Development Block of Kerala and forms part of the Mannarkad Taluk of the Palakkad District. It has a total land area of 745 sq.km, spread over three Panchayaths, namely

Agali, Pudur and Sholayur. This hilly terrain is made fertile by the river Bhavani and its main tributary Siruvani.

Tribal people alone once inhabited Attapady, but now it has become the recipient of waves of migration from the plains of the east and west, which eventually made the tribes a minority. The tribal population belongs to the Irula, Muduga and Kurumba communities, whereas the non-tribes consist of settlers from other parts of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

Attapady is part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. Nilgiri has a complex topography, which is isolated from the high ranges. The mountains in this range are some of the oldest geological formations in South Western India. Under the meteorological characteristics, rainfall varies considerably in the Attapady Block, being higher on the western slopes and dwindling towards the east (450-3,000 mm). This area receives an average of 1,000 mm rainfall per year. The temperature varies from 23-33 degrees centigrade. Dry wind from the eastern Deccan Plateau causes a faster rate of evaporation during the summer months. The boundaries touch Nilgiri in the north, Coimbatore in the east, Palakkad in the south and Malapuram in the west. The western slopes are under dense vegetation whereas the eastern slopes have scanty vegetation. The Attapady region is drained by two major rivers, the Bhavani and the Kunthi. Siruvani, Varagar and Kodugarapallam are the main tributaries of the Bahvani river which flows to Tamil Nadu then joins the Kaveri River. The river Kunti is one of the major tributaries of the Bharathapuzha originating in Angindamudy of in the Silent Valley National Park.

The Attapady Block is located between 10°-20' & 11°-14' north latitude and 76°-20' and 76°-54' east longitude. The terrain of Attapady is quite undulating with varying elevations, ranging from 450 to 2,300 meters above sea level. The majority of the area falls within the category of land above a 35 per cent slope, and the rest with an erosion landscape. About 40 per cent of the eastern slopes are in the rain-shadow region. Out of the total area of 745 sq.km, forest land is 444sq.km, agricultural land 130.03 sq.km, waste land 157.31 sq.km and rivers and roads 14.49 sq.km (AHADS, 2007).

The Migration History of Attapady

By the early 18th Century, Attapady had become *Jenmom* property of the Zamorin of Kozhikode. The Zamorin entrusted the administration of this area to three Nair Chieftains, namely Mannarkad Moopil, Palat Krishna Menon and Eralapad Raja. When Zamorin was pleased by Moopil Nair,

he received large areas of land in Mannarkad, including forest areas in Attapady. Nair was given an area a horse can cover. However, Moopil Nair and other Jenmees were not doing any cultivation except elephant capturing. The Chieftains were given the right to collect land revenue at the rate of Rs. 0.50 to 1.25 per acre of land and forest produce respectively as land revenue from the Tribes. They were either tenants or lessees of their Jenmi. They were heavily exploited by the Manager (*Kariasthan*) of the Jenmi. In the meantime, the Jenmees managed to get jenmam (freehold of property) of these lands from the Zamorin. Moopil Nair alone was given 70 per cent of Attapady land. In the 1950s a few landlords were given lease rights to the western part of Agali. About 6,000 acres of land were given to one Kunju Ahamed Sahib of Mannarkad. Of the total area, 21 hills and one part belonged to government. Disputes between Jenmees had led to bloodshed in 1901.

Prior to the re-organisation of the Kerala State in 1957, from 1800 onwards the Attapady area was under the Malabar District of the Madras Government. Later it was made part of Kerala. The Madras Government did not pay the required attention to the improvement of the tribal tract. An organised effort was only started during 1961 with the introduction of the National Extension Service under the Five-Year Plans. Unfortunately not much effort was made to identify the problems of the inhabitants or the environmental aspects. Agricultural and animal husbandry only reached areas easily accessible or hamlets lying in close proximity to the roads and embankments. But it has to be remembered that the Applied Nutrition Programme with external assistance could permeate deep into the interior habitations.

Massive plundering of the forest wealth had commenced as early as the pre-independence period at Attapady. This continued even after the state re-organisation in 1957. With the introduction of the Block Development System and instituting developmental departments, a large number of roads and subways were constructed. Development efforts were seriously undermined in the past on account of several factors such as the general outlook of the functionaries towards tribal development, defects in planning processes, misgivings in implementation, ineffective monitoring and evaluation.

The Forest Protection and Preservation Act helped to avoid massive tree felling and the consequent ecological degradation. This was a heavy blow to the normal livelihoods of the tribal population who subsisted on forest produce and were dependent on the forest for their livelihood.

This caused unemployment and poverty. The tribes were gradually being converted into a labour force for the settlers.

The situation of the settlers was also not much better. This can be traced back to the history of migration. The Attapady area was considered a malaria-stricken tract to which the affluent classes of society did not migrate. It was only the economically backward and destitute who migrated to Attapady. Financial constraints and the unpredictability of reasonable returns for their efforts from the fragile eco-system ever remained threats. In the absence of any proper system for the marketing of products, the farmers were in a serious financial crisis. Some of the settlers turned into traders and middlemen. It is quite natural that these people occupied a better position in the economic ladder of the society. Gradually there developed excessive exploitation of the common man and the normal life of the inhabitants became seriously miserable (AHADS, 2007).

Attapady Population Details

According to the 2011 census, the total population of Attapady was 64,318 with 27,627 (43%) scheduled tribes and 36,691 (57%) migrants inclusive of the scheduled caste population. The demographic details are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Attapady Block-Village wise Households and Population

<i>Names of the Revenue Villages in Grama Panchayath (G.P)</i>	<i>Households</i>	<i>Population</i>		
		<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Agali	5,834	22,562	11,363	11,199
Kallamala	2,861	12,379	6,030	6,349
G.P- Total	8,695	34,941	17,393	17,548
Sholayur	1,880	6,996	3,499	3,497
Kottathara	2,795	10,211	5,080	5,131
G.P-Total	4,675	17,207	8,579	8,628
Pudur	1,346	4,672	2,344	2,328
Padavayal	2,149	7,498	3,719	3,779
G.P-Total	3,495	12,170	6,063	6,107
Grand Total	16,865	64,318	32,035	32,283

Source: Census India, 2011.

The migrants originated from other parts of Kerala and the neighbouring states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Scheduled Tribes belong to the Dravidian category and consist mainly of Irula, Mudugas and Kurumbas communities. Tribal peoples constituted the majority of the population in 1961 but they had become a minority by 1971. In-migration to this area has been increasing presumably due to lesser land value.

The tribes in Attapady have a rich cultural heritage consisting of mystic beliefs, blackmagic and indigenous wisdom. They traditionally had a political system to maintain the social order of each hamlet in harmony with the natural resources. The 'Ooru-moopan' was the chief of the Society. 'Kuruthalai' was a high ministerial position. 'Bhandari' who assisted him can be considered as the treasurer of modern times. 'Mannukkaran' was a reverential position in the social order. He was considered as a folk environmentalist determining the sowing season, management of crops, and handling indigenous methods. Even now the elders reverentially remember this hierarchy (Pillai, 1989). The alienation from resources, encroachment and modernisation have shifted the traditional power structure and created a vacuum and reduced its strength.

According to the 2011 Census, there were 27,627 tribal people living in 191 hamlets, with Irulas forming 83 per cent, Muduga 10 per cent and Kurumba seven per cent respectively. Category-wise population details of tribal people and migrants in the different villages in the Attapady Block are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Attapady Block-Village wise Population of Migrants and Tribes

<i>Name of Revenue Village in Grama Panchayath (G.P)</i>	<i>Total House holds</i>	<i>Migrant Population</i>		<i>Tribal Population</i>		
		<i>Total</i>	<i>Migrant</i>	<i>Tribal</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Agali	5,834	22,562	14,576	7,986	4,036	3,950
Kallamala	2,861	12,379	9,386	2,993	1,391	1,542
G.P- Total	8,695	34,941	24,022	10,919	5,427	5,492
Sholayur	1,880	6,996	3,341	3,655	1,811	1,844
Kottathara	2,795	10,211	5,289	4,922	2,442	2,480
G.P-Total	4,675	17,207	8630	8,577	4,253	4,324
Pudur	1,346	4,672	1996	2,676	1,348	1,328
Padavayal	2,149	7,498	2043	5,455	2,680	2,775
G.P-Total	3,495	12,170	4039	8,131	4,028	4,103
Grand Total	16,865	64,318	36691	27,627	13,708	13,919

Source: Census India, 2011.

The Irulas are numerically dominant and are relatively advanced among the three tribal communities at Attapady. They probably occupied this area after the Kurumbas and Mudugas. Mudugas are the second largest community covering 24 hamlets. It is believed that the Mudugas were the original inhabitants of Coimbatore and later went westward due to the persecution and domination by more dominant communities. The Kurumbas are considered to be the earliest tribal inhabitants of Attapady. When the British started colonising the Nilgiris, they moved down to the Attapady valley.

The non-tribal people from Coimbatore must have established early contact with the Irulas of Attapady, and many Tamil Gounders began to migrate to the eastern side. Although they came mainly for agriculture, at first they did not settle down in the area. Towards the 1930s, however, the Gounders began to settle in Attapady and cleared the forests. The Kurumbas and Mudugas who occupied in the interior areas were not much affected by these early settlements.

However, from 1940 to the 1980s, a large number of people from the plains of Kerala moved to the Attapady valley, mainly to exploit forest wealth as well as the availability of cultivable lands. It was only after an all-weather road from Mannarkad to Mallewaram Kovil was constructed in 1946 and later extended to Coimbatore that the pattern of migration changed. The pace of migration into the area increased from about 800 persons per year between 1951-61 to 2,000 per year during 1961-71. The sudden influx of a large number of people into the Attapady valley caused a negative impact on the life of the tribal people and the ecology of the area. The migrants who settled down in the drier zones in the three villages - Agali, Pudur and Sholayur - were from the neighbouring areas of Tamil Nadu. The migrants of Keralan origin settled in the high rainfall areas of Karara, Chittur and Sholayur. The cultivation practices of the migrant groups determined the choice of location of the settlement (AHADS, 2007).

The Dynamics and Determinants of Migration

Factors Leading to Migration

Socio-economic, politico-cultural and religious factors motivate people to migrate but at the same time pride and fear stall migration (Racince, 1997).

The factors of migration may vary according to the types. Migration flows are determined by a complex of interactions of economic and demographic factors (Spengler, 1961). The economic factor is the main factor in determining migration, with the socio-cultural aspects also playing a leading role. In Indian society, when the low caste people migrate they can have vertical occupational mobility. Improvements in educational standards, openings to new ideas and advancement in transport and communication have increased the rate of migration.

There are economic and non-economic factors in migration such as family ties, community affiliation and religion. In the context of zero population growth and documented decrease in fertility in many countries, migration is the main determinant. The other factors are personal values and motivation, place utility, community and social networks, environmental pressure and constraints, kinship structure and family migration strategies (De Jong, 1981).

The factors that helped in Malayalee migration are the presence of important seaports and contact with people from other countries, higher education and skills, and better communication media and transport systems. Stagnated agriculture and industry in Kerala also induced people to seek employment outside the state and nation (Joseph, 1989). Natives' movements, racism and fundamentalism restrict migration movements.

Population growth in rural areas raised the man-land ratio and thereby unemployment and underemployment. Economic degradation in rural areas caused by unemployment and the inability to support the increasing population attracted people to urban areas for employment (Pooley and Whyte, 1991). According to Jeena (1997), government policies on land ownership, Green Revolution and commercialisation of agriculture were the main factors for peasantry migration. International migration very much depends upon the government policies of each nation. Transport and communication determine the tempo and the volume of migration.

Major Problems faced by Migrants

There are various problems faced by migrants at the place of origin

and the destination. Social adjustment to the new place, new environment, culture, tradition, values and ideologies are the major problems they face in the place of destination. According to Joseph (1989), problems of settlement are mainly adjusting food habits, accommodation, language, education of children, finding appropriate partners in marriage and exploitation. Often local people and government officials brand the migrants as exploiters. The nativity movement as 'sons of soil' is raised against them and reduces their opportunities.

In the context of absence of the family and social control in the new area, sizeable numbers of migrants are addicted to alcoholism, drugs and lead a loose moral life. According to John (1986), Malayalee migrants at Shimoga in Karnataka were alienated and isolated from their near and dear ones. Economic opportunities for development were often denied in the places of origin and destination.

By all accounts the early migration to Malabar was pushed by economic problems and motivated by a promise of prosperity. The early migration being into the interior of Malabar regions, the early settlers had to undergo a series of hardships, even to the extent of costing lives. Away from their native lands and culture, these individual migrants, with or without their families, had to face the dangers of the forest, wild elephants, isolation, spiritual insecurity, and health hazards. The worst was the deadly malaria fever and social isolation (Gregory, 2005).

Effects of Migration

Migration has far-reaching positive and negative impacts not only on the migrants and local people but also on the families back in their previous places. The place of origin and the place of destination experience both gains and losses. In general, the economic status of the migrants has a progressive trend and they are able to reduce their indebtedness, take more nutritious food and create assets. Regarding the social aspect, migration creates a diffusion of two societies and their behaviour. Transmission of language, behaviour, cultural values and religious practices influenced the two communities.

From the point of the local people, migrants are often advantageous to them. However, they are responsible for causing a number of problems—environmental, social, psychological and economic. Migration also leads to social problems like begging, prostitution, drug abuse, child abuse, lack of housing and other amenities. Migration also creates an ecological impact. A major problem is that migration carries away the cream of the society, the young migrants.

The peasantry migration to Malabar, especially Attapady, had positive and negative impacts on migrants, tribal people and nature. According to Sivaswamy (1945), small agricultural farmers from Travancore migrated to Malabar to use wastelands for cultivation; but they had to face the many hardships of extreme climate, health issues of malaria, wild animal attacks and poverty in the first phase of migration. The migrants could survive all challenges and thus lead a prosperous life. Contributions to the fields of education, agriculture and socio-economic fields by the migrants at Attapady have surely helped the indigenous people there.

According to Pillai et al. (1989: 7), “The settlers from Tamil Nadu and Travancore areas have taken possession of most of the fertile lands near the riverbeds. Exploitation by middlemen in procuring the farm produce of the tribal people has been going on and continues to be so. Alienation of land of the tribal people was a major problem in the area.” Jeena(1997: 8), in her study at Idukki, found that peasantry migration into forest areas for cultivation reduced the forest. The forest coverage in Idukki was 65 per cent in 1961 which was reduced to 42 per cent in 1991. According to Varghese (2009), Kerala’s story of agrarian capitalism is intermeshed in its specific history of colonial intervention and local reciprocation. Streams of migrants have contributed greatly to agriculture in Kerala.

Conflicts and Conflict Resolution

Gregory (2005) proposed certain suggestions for the co-existence of settler farmers and the indigenous people. Today, the settler-farmers and their descendants have families rooted in the soil of Malabar while the alienated natives, having lost all hope, are fighting to the last for the sheer survival of their earthly existence. In spite of all the policies and approaches of the

government and the legislative, and constitutional privileges extended to the natives, normal practices of life had only contributed to the systematic alienation of the natives at all levels, with possible exceptions. In the light of this experience it is important to adopt a realistic approach to the entire issue.

Gregory (2005) categorised the tribal people at three levels according to their self-preparedness to be integrated into the main stream. The first group includes those who are at the adaptive stage or potentially capable of encountering the outside society on their own. The second category comprises those who had been at the receiving end from the mainstream, and have suffered the maximum disadvantage due to the onslaughts of modernity. The third group still possess something of their pristine past and is not much affected by the external influences and is confident of reviving their original culture.

Based on the differential disposition of these categories, the problems of each group should be addressed differently. The problems of the first group may be addressed by ensuring their access to livelihood strategies and facilitating the enhancement of their social and economic capacity. The second group who are in the transitional trauma stage should receive the maximum healing touch, and be helped to maintain their collective life by ensuring their rights to their livelihoods in the land where they live and declaring such an area as a scheduled area. The third group should be allowed to maintain their distinctiveness 'along the lines of their own genius' by rehabilitating them in the areas of the reserved forest and enabling them to lead a natural way of life with full freedom and with minimum external intervention, while making use of their traditional knowledge in the efficient management and protection of the wildlife and natural forest resources.

It should be ensured that all those who deal with the affairs of tribes are absolutely sensitive to the tribal way of life and have totally understood the Nehruvian principles concerning the natives. The settlers should be made to realise that consciously or unconsciously they were also responsible for the present plight of their tribal brethren, and adopt a humanitarian approach by taking their own initiatives in facilitating the process of rehabilitating the native neighbours. In this

context, the government, along with the service organisations and other humanitarian groups, should play a constructive and proactive role by becoming part of such initiatives towards the process of reconciliation and rehabilitation.

Summary and Conclusion

In the present paper, the attempt was to give the conceptual and theoretical background of the phenomenon of migration with a special focus on the unique type of peasantry in-migration at Attapady. The Attapady area is characterised mainly by two factors, namely the presence of a tribal population and being part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve Forest.

The peasants of Travancore and Coimbatore and other areas of the two States came to Attapady in the 1930s onwards in search of wastelands for cultivation and to collect forest produce. It was mostly the economically backward of destitute that migrated to Attapady. Although the economic status of the migrants is improving, they face serious financial constraints, the unpredictability of reasonable returns for their efforts from the fragile eco-system and the issue of the regularisation of land documents.

The sudden influx of a large number of migrants into the Attapady Valley caused a negative impact on the life of the indigenous people and the ecology of the area. Migration has its positive and negative impacts on the major stakeholders -the migrants, the indigenous people and nature. Conflicts among the stakeholders are quite common. Studies of the issues involved and conflict resolution mechanisms are imperative for a peaceful co-existence and sustainable development.

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