Labour Migration to Kerala

Benoy Peter and Vishnu Narendran

Kannur

District Migration Profile

Savan R.S.
Laterite mining, fishing, plywood, dredging and sand mining, construction, handloom and beedi are some of the major industries in Kannur. The district also has several industrial estates. Laterite mining, fishing and plywood industries are heavily dependent on migrant workers. Beedi and handloom sectors however, do not engage migrant workers. Aralam farm currently does not engage significant number of migrant workers. Granite mining, which is another sector in Kannur, was stagnant during the study due to court interventions. The Bell metal cluster at Kunhimangalam in Payyanur continues to be traditional. Migrant workers are engaged in the industrial estates in Kannur. They work in the hotels and restaurants across the district too.

In addition to Kannur corporation limits, Azhikkal, Poythumkadavu, Valapattanam, Thalassery, Koothuparamba, Thalipparamba, Andoor, Payyanur, Mattannur, Blathur, Ulikkal, Oorathur and Kalyad are some of the points where there is concentration of migrant workers. Industrial units in Andoor, Mangattuparamb, Palayad, Valiyavelicham and Nadukani employ migrant workers. Migrants from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya and Rajasthan are found working in Kannur district.

Laterite Mining

Laterite stones from Kannur are transported to other districts in Kerala and also to the neighbouring Karnataka state. Most of the laterite mining is concentrated in Iritty and Thalipparamba taluks. Urathoor, Blathoor, Kaillad, Nuchiyad, Kurumathoor and Ulikkal are some of the mining pockets. The work involves heavy physical labour in a dusty environment. Migrant workers from Assam and Karnataka were found to be the majority engaged in the mining work in Urathoor. Unlike Bengali Muslims from Assam who are available in large numbers across several districts in Kerala, single Hindu and Christian men from Lower Assam were found to be the majority in the laterite mining sector. Rabha, Boro, Barman and Narsari are some of the common surnames. Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Barpeta and Bongaigaon are the districts of their origin. Migrant workers from Karnataka engaged in the laterite mining sector are predominantly from the northern and central Karnataka districts of Dharwad, Belagavi, Davangere, and also from Udupi. Those who operated the excavators are mostly from Tamil Nadu. Men from Assam as well as Karnataka were found working at the same site but ganging up according to the states they hailed from.

Marine Fishing

Azhikkal and Ayikkara are the harbours in Kannur district. Traditional fishers from five Indian states were found operating in Azhikkal harbour. Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal are the native states of traditional fishers who work in Azhikkal. Kanyakumari district and Rameswaram in Ramanathapuram district are the source areas for workers from Tamil Nadu. Fishers from Udupi in Karnataka and Srikakulam and Vizianagaram in Andhra Pradesh are also found here. Odiya fishers from Balasore, Cuttack, Khordha and Puri, and Bengal Hindu fishers from South 24 Parganas district also work on the fishing boats. Odiya fishers said that due to the presence of turtles (Olive Ridley Turtles) it was ‘risky’ for them to operate on the Odisha coast. These turtles get trapped in the net and die. The net also gets damaged. Fishers from Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Odisha are found in Ayikkara harbour.

Plywood Industry

Valapattanam has a cluster of plywood and allied industrial units. One of the oldest and largest plywood manufacturing units in India is in Valapattanam. Workers from Odisha, Assam and West Bengal were found working in plywood and allied units in Valapattanam. Workers from Dhemaji, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts of Assam, and Jajpur, Bhadrak and Dhenkanal districts in Odisha are found here. Saran, Sivan and Katihar are the districts in Bihar from where
workers come to Valapattanam. Jajpur, Angul, Bhadrak, Dhenkanal, Gajapati, Ganjam and Kendrapara are the districts of origin of migrant workers from Odisha. Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh, Ballia in Uttar Pradesh, South Tripura in Tripura, Udalguri and Dhubri districts in Assam are also source districts. Migrant workers from the districts of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, North and South 24 Parganas in West Bengal are documented within the Valapattanam police station limits. Workers from Tamil Nadu and Manipur can also be found. The government Primary Health Centre in Valapattanam has a Hindi name board. Though the majority are single male migrants, Valapattanam has migrant families also.

**Dredging and Sand Mining**

The dredging work for Azhikkal Port on the Valapattanam side of the Valapattanam River and sand mining engage migrant labour in large numbers. Poythumkadavu which is a core dredging area has migrant workers from Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Tamil Nadu. Men were found toiling in the water and on the bank of the river under native supervisors. They lived in rented rooms and houses in and around Poythumkadavu. They reportedly start work very early in the morning and earn around Rs 1000 a day or even more. Children of a few migrant workers study in Poythumkadavu Upper Primary School.

**Construction**

The construction of Kannur International Airport at Mattannur is a major site where migrant workers are engaged in large numbers. These workers are housed in temporary sheds made of corrugated sheets, typical of the construction sector all over India. Workers from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal have been hired for the work. The construction of regulator-cum-bridge at Cherupuzha engaged workers predominantly from West Bengal and Karnataka. Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Odisha are the native states of migrants at the labour nakas who work in the construction sector.

**Labour Nakas**

South Bazar near Kaltex Circle in Kannur city is one of the major nakas in the city. Workers from Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Assam assemble near the Indian Coffee House seeking work. Men from Viluppuram and Salem districts in Tamil Nadu, Purnia and Saran in Bihar, Ballia and Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, Chirang in Assam and Cuttack in Odisha can also be found here. Chala bypass junction is another major labour naka in the Kannur city premises. In Thalipparamba, migrant workers assemble in front of the taxi stand and near the bus stand in the morning for work. Poovam near Nadukani has a labour naka. Nakas were found near the overbridge in Thalassery, in front of the private bus stand in Koothuparamba as well as in Payyannur.

**Residential Pockets**

Migrant fishers in Azhikkal live on the boats or in rented rooms in nearby areas. Poythumkadavu and Valapattanam are also residential pockets of migrant workers. There are numerous buildings on the Azhikkal -Valapattanam Road housing migrant workers. Those working in the factories in Valapattanam live on the factory premises or nearby. On the Palayad Road in Thalipparamba, several buildings house migrant workers from Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Assam, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Mattanoor airport construction site also houses migrant workers. Workers in the laterite mining pockets live near the mining area in rented houses. Parimba on the Corom Road in Payyannur has buildings where migrant workers, predominantly from West Bengal, stay.

Uratthoor, Blathoor, Kalliad, Nuchiyad, Kurumathoor and Ulakkal are some of the laterite stone mining pockets.
Azhikkal and Ayikkara are the harbours in Kannur district. Traditional fishers from five Indian states were found operating in Azhikkal harbour.
Kasaragod

Benoy Peter and Vishnu Narendran

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Kasaragod has always been an agrarian economy. Although fishing is a livelihood option along its coastal belt, there are no major fishing harbours in the district. Backward in industrial development, the district has only a few industrial clusters besides a solar energy park in Ambalathara which is in the process of being developed. Handloom products of Kasaragod are quite popular, especially the Kasaragod Saree. And the sector continues to engage native workers. Laterite mining thrives in Hosdurg, Kasaragod and Vellarikkund taluks, and the mining units predominantly engage workers from north eastern India and northern Karnataka. Although not prominent, construction work is also a means of livelihood and depends heavily on migrant workers. The Plantation Corporation does not engage workers from other states in its Periya plantation. The cashew factory in Ambalathara and the tile factory in Neeleswaram too do not engage migrant workers as reported.

Despite the lack of major industries, migrant workers from most of the source states are found in Kasaragod district. One significant difference from the rest of the districts, except Wayanad, is the presence of a large number of workers from Karnataka. The district shares its border with Karnataka and naturally one would expect workers here from the adjacent Dakshina Kannada, Mysuru and Kodagu districts. Although workers from these districts are present, the majority of the migrant workforce from Karnataka in Kasaragod is from the backward regions of northern Karnataka, especially from districts like Bagalkot, Belagavi, Gadag, Haveri, Koppal, Hassan, Dharwad and Ballari. Workers from Shivamogga and Davangere districts also are present in large number. A lot of these migrant workers are here with their families that include kids.

Presence of workers from Jashpur district in Chhattisgarh, Guna and Morena in Madhya Pradesh and Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh has been documented in various police stations in the city. Udalguri, Sonitpur and Morigaon districts in Assam, Sawai Madhopur, Chittorgarh, Karauli and Jalore districts in Rajasthan, Giridih and Koderma in Jharkhand, Sangli and Buldhana in Maharashtra, Jamui, Rohtas, Madhubani, Nawada and Bhagalpur in Bihar, Hooghly, Uttar Dinajpur and Dakshin Dinajpur, West Medinipur, Alipurduar, Jalpaiguri, Murshidabad, Nadia, North 24 Parganas and Cooch Behar in West Bengal, Moradabad, Gonda, Maharajganj, Azamgarh, Bareily, Balmampur, Mirzapur and Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh are some of the source districts of migrant workers in Kasaragod city. Viluppuram, Thanjavur, Cuddalore, Salem, Pudukkottai, Vellore, Dharmapuri and Madurai are the districts in Tamil Nadu from where people have come to Kasaragod for livelihood.

Construction

The construction of Kasaragod Central University in Periya was the major work undertaken in this sector in Kasaragod district in the recent past. Here too, migrant workers lived in typical residential camps in vogue in the construction sector in India. Workers from Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and West Bengal lived in rooms made of corrugated sheets. Those from Assam hailed from Bongaigaon, Morigaon and Nagaon districts. Migrants from East Champaran, Aurangabad and Jamui in Bihar were also among the workforce. Migrants from Dharwad district in Karnataka and Bokaro district in Jharkhand were found at the Velluda Solar Park installation site in Ambalathara. Migrants from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal also worked here. Women migrants from Buldhana district in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra and men from Jharkhand were found working at the Sitangoli road construction project.
The majority of the migrant workforce in Kasaragod is from northern Karnataka. A lot of them come with families including children. Chattanchal, Cherkkala, Hosangadi, Uppala, Velluda and Periya are some of the residential pockets.
Late rate mining in Hosdurg, Kasaragod and Vellarikkund taluks, engages migrant labour.

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Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development

CMID is an independent non-profit think tank devoted to migration and inclusive development, advocating for and promoting the social inclusion of migrants. CMID provides evidence informed solutions for mainstreaming inter-state migrant workers in India. This district brief was prepared based on a qualitative research undertaken by the authors across the 14 districts in Kerala during November 2016–May 2017. The study was funded by Thummarukudy Foundation. CMID also acknowledges the fellowship provided to the authors by Aajeevika Bureau during January to June 2017.
Labour Migration to Kerala

Kollam

Benoy Peter and Vishnu Narendran
Construction, cashew, fishing, seafood, brick kilns, mining and hospitality are the major economic sectors in Kollam and all of these employ migrant labourers significantly.

Construction

Most of the migrants in the construction sector in Kollam district are from West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu and Odisha. In addition to Kollam town, Karunagappalli, Chavara, Kottarakkara, Punalur and Ochira are the major areas where construction of commercial buildings and residential properties are progressing. Construction of the Institute of Infrastructure at Chavara is one of the government-commissioned constructions in Kollam district. Jalpaiguri and Malda are the major source districts of workers from West Bengal. Assamese construction workers are mainly from Nagaon and Dibrugarh. A lot of these construction workers are associated with local contractors. Naka-based workers also were engaged in construction.

Cashew

Kollam district is one of the major exporters of processed cashew in the country. Private cashew factories in Kollam now depend heavily on migrant labourers. The factories are mainly located in Kollam, Kottarakkara, Karunagappally and Kunnathur taluks. Thodyoor, Chakkuvally, Kaithakkattukulam, Kilikkollur, Kochupilamoodu and Puthoor are the major clusters of cashew factories. The number of local women working in the factories is slowly declining. During the field visit many of the cashew companies in Kollam were closed due to shortage of cashew. Migrant workers in cashew factories are mainly from Jalpaiguri, Murshidabad, Cooch Behar and Malda districts in West Bengal. There are also workers from Dibrugarh, Nagaon, Jorhat and Majuli in Assam. Workers from Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh can also be found.

Fishing and Fish Processing

Marine fishing in Kollam engages migrant workers. Neendakara and Saktihkulangara have concentration of migrants who work in the fisheries sector. Tamil Nadu, Assam and West Bengal are the major source states when it comes to fishing. Kanyakumari is the major source district for fishers from Tamil Nadu. Those from Assam come mainly from Dibrugarh, Golpara and Nagaon districts. Cooch Behar, Murshidabad, South 24 Parganas, Jalpaiguri, Malda and Murshidabad are the source districts in West Bengal. Neendakara and Saktihkulangara are also fish processing hubs. Migrant men and women from Karnataka and Assam work in the seafood industry. The ice plants along the coastal belt also engage migrant labourers. Workers from Kokrajhar district in Assam were found working in these plants.
Brick Kilns
The brick kilns in Kollam are concentrated on the banks of river Pallikkal. Ochira, Kannamam, Pavumba, Pulikkulam, Thodiyoor and Mynagappally are the major locations. Workers were mainly from West Bengal, Jharkhand, Assam, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. The workers stay on the premises of the kilns. A majority of the workers are single men, but families are also present in some places. Major source districts are Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar in West Bengal, Nagaon and Dibrugarh in Assam, Ranchi and Gumla in Jharkhand, Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh, and Buxar and Madhubani in Bihar.

Nakas
Ochira temple junction, Karunagappalli junction on the highway, Anayadi, Bharanikkavu, S.N. Puram, Kottarakkara Market Road, Thodiyoor and Mayyanad are the major nakas in the district.

Residential Pockets
Cinemaparambu in Bharanikkavu, S.N. Puram in Kottarakkara and Neendakara in Kollam are the major residential pockets identified in the district. There are also scattered presence of workers in Ezhukone, Kizhakkeputhiyakavu, Chakkuvelly and Thodiyoor. Many in the fishing sector stay on the boats or in rented rooms close to the harbour.

Jalpaiguri-Kollam, Cooch Behar-Kollam and Nagaon-Kollam have evolved as migration corridors.
Marine fishing in Kollam engages migrant workers. Tamil Nadu, Assam and West Bengal are the major source states when it comes to fishing.

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Labour Migration to Kerala

Kozhikode

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District Migration Profile
Construction, fishing, timber, tiles, footwear and handloom are the major industries in the district. Construction, fishing and footwear heavily depend on migrant labour. The clay tile industry in Farook and the timber industry in Kallayi continue to be dominated by native workers. Handlooms remain a traditional sector with exclusive native labour. Hotels and restaurants in the city employ migrant workers, particularly from northeastern India and Nepal. Young men, even from Tripura, can be found working in the hotel industry. They travel nearly 4,000km from their native place, taking five days to reach Kozhikode. In addition to Kozhikode Corporation, Koyilandy, Vadakara, Kutyadi, Nadapuram, Thamarassery, Thiruvambady and Anakkampoyil are some of the locations where concentration of migrant workers can be found. In Koodaranji, Thamarassery, Ponoor, Koodathai and Ommassery also workers were visibly prominent. Major source states are Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Assam, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. Over the years, a corridor has evolved between Kozhikode and Bardhaman, South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas districts in West Bengal. Nadia, Darjeeling, Purba Medinipur, Murshidabad, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and Hooghly are the other districts in West Bengal reported as native districts by workers. Migrant workers from Tamil Nadu and West Bengal dominate the construction and fishing sectors, whereas workers from Bihar are the majority in the footwear industry.

Construction
Kozhikode is one of the four major construction hubs in the state. In addition to the city, there is a slew of construction work-flats as well as commercial buildings-progressing on both sides of the bypass. There are also lot of infrastructure development work going on within the corporation area and its peripheries. Like other districts in Kerala, the construction sector in Kozhikode depends heavily on migrant labour. Workers, predominantly from Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh are employed in the construction sector. For minor construction, naka labourers are engaged directly or through contractors. One of the oldest labour contract societies which undertake significant infrastructure development projects in Kozhikode, employs nearly 1,000 migrant workers. These workers are mainly from Assam, West Bengal and Odisha. Even in remote corners of the district, major projects depend on migrant workers. For example, Santali tribal men from Jharkhand work in Anakkampoyil at the Kandappanchal hydroelectric project site.

Marine Fishing
Traditional fishers from Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Odisha were found operating across the fishing harbours in Kozhikode district. Beyapore, Puthiyappa and Koyilandy are the important fish landing centres in the district, Beyapore being a major port. Fishers from Colachel in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu have been historically present in the harbour. Some of them even co-own boats operated from Beyapore. The Srank (Captain) of the boat would typically be a worker from Tamil Nadu. Traditional Hindu fishers from Kakkdiwip in the Sundarban region of South 24 Parganas district in West Bengal and fishers from Odisha coast, particularly from Khordha and Puri districts, also work in Beyapore, in addition to fishers from Kanyakumari. While in Beyapore and Puthiyappa harbours, fishers from Tamil Nadu and East Bengal dominate, migrants from Odisha coast were found to be the majority in Koyilandy. Tamil fishers from Cuddalore and Colachel are also present, but they are fewer in number. These fishers either live on the boats or in rented rooms near the harbours. In addition to these migrant fishers, unskilled workers from Assam, particularly from Dhenujai and Sivasagar, can also be found, loading and unloading fish and ice from boats or trucks.

Vellimadukunnu is one of the largest residential pockets of migrant workers, predominantly from West Bengal and Assam.
Footwear
Along the Ramanattukara – Nallalam stretch, there are several industrial units in the footwear value chain which employ migrant men, mostly from eastern Indian states. A footwear major in Kerala, which has several units along this stretch, employs workers predominantly from Bihar. There are also workers from Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal and other states. These workers are recruited through a referral system without employing intermediaries. A good employee refers potential employees known to him to the unit. These workers are provided typical benefits such as ESI and PF. The referral system ensures better retention and productivity. Purnia, Madhepura, Champaran, Sitamarhi, Samastipur, Araria, Saran, Mirsapur, Madhubani, Kishanganj and Katihar are some of the districts in Bihar from where people come to work in the footwear industry.

Labour Nakas
Meenjanda bypass junction, Cherambalam, Pottamal, Kovoor and Vellimadukunnu are some of the labour nakas in Kozhikode city. Workers from Tamil Nadu can be found concentrated at Cherambalam, whereas other labour joints had workers from multiple states. Meenjanda and Vellimadukunnu naka were found dominated by migrant workers from West Bengal. Workers assemble near the New Hotel in front of the old private bus stand in Vadakara and in front of the market in Kutyadi.

Residential Pockets
Merikkunnu/Vellimadukunnu is one of the largest residential pockets of migrant workers, predominantly from West Bengal and Assam. Kadavu Road (Poolakkadavu) in Vellimadukunnu has several buildings on its both sides housing a large number of migrant workers. Beypore is another major residential hub of migrant workers, particularly those who work in the fishing sector. Maruthonkara Road in Kutyadi also houses a significant number of migrant workers. Workers commute to various places nearby from Kutyadi, Koyilandy, Vatakara, Thamarassery, Kodaranji, Thiruvambady and Anakkampoyil are some of the other residential areas. Anakkampoyil church had a Hindi service on Sunday evenings during December 2016.

In addition to Tamil fishers, traditional fishers from Sundarban in West Bengal as well as Puri and Khordha districts in Odisha work on boats operating from Kozhikode.
Along the Ramanattukara – Nallalam stretch, there are several industrial units in the footwear value chain which employ migrant workers, mostly from eastern Indian states.

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Thiruvananthapuram

Benoy Peter and Vishnu Narendran
Economic sectors in Thiruvananthapuram include information technology, transportation, hospitality, construction, fisheries, textile and apparel including handlooms, coir as well as mining and quarrying. There are also several public sector enterprises located in the district. Numerous small industrial units also function here. Except the traditional sectors such as handloom and coir, most sectors engage migrant workers. Unlike in other districts, marine fishing in Thiruvananthapuram does not engage migrant workers in large numbers. Construction is a major sector of employment for the migrants. West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Odisha, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh are the major source states. Hospitality sector has people from Tamil Nadu, northeastern Indian states, Darjeeling district in West Bengal, as well as from Nepal. Food processing units, pavement block manufacturing units and cement brick manufacturing units scattered in the district engage migrant workers. Kazhakkoottam, Menamkulam, Vizhinjam, Pothenkode and Neyyattinkara are the major clusters that have been identified. Gandhi Park in East Fort is a meeting place of these migrants during weekends.

Construction

Thiruvananthapuram is a major hub of construction activities in Kerala. The Kazhakkoottam-Kovalam stretch of the city bypass is the main hot spot of construction activities. In addition to the IT parks, hotels, convention centres, commercial parks and several infrastructure projects are also coming up. Widening of Kazhakkoottam-Mukkala National Highway bypass and Vizhinjam Container Terminal are the mega government projects in progress. All construction activities depend on migrant workers. A majority of the workers in the government-commissioned projects are from West Bengal, Assam, Odisha, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.

Workers from Malda, Murshidabad, Jalpaiguri in West Bengal, Dhubri, Nagaon, Dibrugarh in Assam, Bhadrak, Balasore, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Kendrapara in Odisha, Shahjahanpur and Rampur in Uttar Pradesh, and Latehar and Deoghar in Jharkhand can be found in the construction sector. People from Kanyakumari, Dindigul, Theni and Madurai in Tamil Nadu also work in this sector.

Textile and Wearing Apparel

The handloom industry in Thiruvananthapuram engages only local labour. Apparel units located in the Apparel Park under the Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation at Menamkulam employ both native and migrant workers. Most of the migrants are from Odisha and Jharkhand. Both men and women work in these companies and most of them have been recruited through an entity facilitated by the National Skill Development Corporation. Companies also run health clinics and crèches. There are hostels for single women inside the park. Women with children or families stay outside the park premises.

Hospitality

Thiruvananthapuram district is also a major tourist destination. The hospitality industry is a significant contributor to the district’s economy. Hotels, resorts and restaurants, including small eateries, engage migrant workers. Thiruvananthapuram city, Kazhakkoottam bypass, Kovalam, Poovar and Varkala are some of the areas where hotels and restaurants are clustered. Most of the migrants working in the hotel industry are from Tamil Nadu, northeast India or Nepal. People from Assam, Mizoram, West Bengal, Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Jharkhand can be found working in the hotels. Men from Konyak tribe of Nagaland were also found working in a hotel in the city.
Mining and Quarrying
The sector is stagnant due to the restriction on mining. However, some of them are still functional. There is a major cluster of quarries in Mukkunnimala in the district and people from Assam can be found working here. Brick kilns too engage migrant workers. Neyyattinkara is a centre of brick kilns in the district. These kilns have workers from Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha, Assam and Jharkhand.

Labour Nakas
The East Fort junction bus stop is the largest labour naka in the city. Labourers from West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Odisha and Jharkhand come here looking for work. Junctions and small towns like Kazhakkoottam, Ulloor, Pulayanarkotta, Nedumangad, Pothenkode, Nettayam, Neyyattinkara, Sreekaryam, Venjaramoodu and Kallambalam have nakas.

Residential Pockets
Kazhakkoottam is a major residential pocket of migrant labourers. Lanes and bylanes at Kazhakkoottam that go inside from the right side of the bypass towards Kovalam is where hundreds of workers live. Thirumala in Nemom area is the other major residential pocket in the city. Veli, Meenankulam, Mukkunnimala, Aakulam, Pothenkode, Karakulam, East Fort, Vembayam, Nedumangad, Venjaramoodu, Kovalam, Vizhinjam and Varkala are some of the other residential areas of migrant workers in the district. In most of these areas, workers stay in rented rooms or on the premises of the construction sites.
Mining and quarrying depends on migrant labour. Mukkunnimala is a major cluster of quarries in Thiruvananthapuram district.