

BEYOND BORDERS: DECIPHERING THE DETERMINANTS OF DURATION OF STAY FOR MIGRANTS

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the factors influencing the length of stay of migrants in their destination regions. By examining various aspects such as the condition in the destination region, religion, social capital, individual characteristics, migration motive, and employment opportunities, we sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of the determinants affecting migrants' duration of residence. This study underscores the multifaceted nature of factors influencing the length of stay of migrants. Policymakers, community leaders, and stakeholders can leverage these findings to formulate more targeted strategies for enhancing the attractiveness and sustainability of destination regions for migrants. Future research could delve deeper into the interplay of these factors and explore dynamic changes in migration patterns over time.

Keywords:- Social Capital, Migration, Length of Stay, Host Region, Migrant Integration, Socioeconomic Factors.

The duration of a migrant's stay in a host country plays a pivotal role in shaping their experience and impact on both the individual and the host community. Short-term stays typically offer limited opportunities for integration and cultural adaptation. Migrants may find it

challenging to fully immerse them in the local environment, hindering their ability to build deep connections and understand the nuances of the host culture. In contrast, longer stays provide a more conducive environment for migrants to engage economically, socially, and culturally. Over an extended period, individuals are more

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likely to establish meaningful relationships within the community, contributing to a sense of belonging. Furthermore, a lengthier duration facilitates the development of language proficiency, a key factor in effective communication and integration.

Economically, migrants with longer stays often have increased chances to secure stable employment and contribute more substantially to the local economy. This prolonged engagement can positively impact the host community by diversifying perspectives and fostering a more inclusive society. Beyond social and economic aspects, the length of stay also intersects with legal considerations. Longer durations may afford migrants the opportunity to pursue more stable residency statuses or citizenship, enhancing their overall security and stability in the host country. Access to essential services, such as healthcare and education, can also be influenced by the duration of stay. Longer-term residents may have better access to these services, positively affecting their well-being and that of their families. In essence, the length of stay is a multifaceted factor that influences the depth of integration, economic contributions, legal standing, and overall quality of life for migrants in their host countries. The interplay of these factors varies for each individual, shaping their decision on how long to stay in a host country.

Statement of the Problem

The research identifies a growing migration trend towards Kerala, with inter-state migrant workers prominently occupying various sectors, particularly the construction industry. This significant

reliance on inter-state migrant labours means that their presence predominantly shapes our labour market. The potential consequences of their absence raise concerns about the effective functioning of the labour market. Consequently, understanding the factors influencing the duration of stay for these migrant workers in Kerala becomes paramount. This study aims to explore and define the key elements affecting the length of stay for migrants in Kerala, providing valuable insights into the dynamics of the labour market in the region.

Scope of the Study

The scope of study in this context refers to the specific boundaries and parameters that define the research focus. In the given statement, the scope of study revolves around understanding the importance of the length of stay in a host region for migrants and investigating the factors that influence this duration. Let's break down and elaborate on the key components.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in its potential to contribute valuable insights into the dynamics of migration and its impact on individuals. Understanding the factors that influence the length of stay for migrants provides policymakers with crucial information. This knowledge can guide the development of more effective and targeted policies related to migration, integration, and support services for migrants. By comprehending the importance of the length of stay in a host region, the study can inform programs and initiatives aimed at enhancing the overall well-being of migrants. This may

include strategies to address challenges faced during the initial stages of migration and promote positive outcomes for a more extended stay.

Understanding the factors that influence migrants' decisions to stay longer in a host region can have economic implications. It can help identify areas where migrants make significant contributions to the local economy, leading to policies that support and harness these contributions for mutual benefit. The study adds to the existing body of knowledge in the field of migration studies. Researchers and academics can use the findings to build upon current theories, develop new frameworks, and guide future studies exploring the complexities of migrant experiences.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this research is to investigate and identify the factors that influence the length of stay for migrants in a host country. By systematically examining these factors, the study aims to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the determinants that shape the duration of migrants' stays.

Review of Literature

According to (Sunny et al., 2020), large numbers of the working-age population, currently estimated at 2.1 million persons have emigrated from Kerala. This has given rise to a situation wherein emigrants are being replaced by the flow of in-migrants from other states in India into Kerala.

(Rajan et al., 2018) observed that the decline of the labour force and the

continuous movements of persons from Kerala to the rest of India and abroad necessitate large-scale migration into Kerala, in order to replace the workforce within the State. There are various factors, like the existence of the best wage rates in the country, the demand for more labour force due to the vacuum by the gulf boom, comparatively better rights and welfare programs for the labours, less exploitation of migrant labours due to better political and cultural traditions, and finally the strong trade unions – that accelerates the migrant flow into Kerala.

(Reagan & Olsen, 2000) have discovered individuals are less inclined to return and migrate during their peak productive years, a period crucial for meeting the demands and preferences of foreign labour market that offer greater economic prospects. This underscores the significance of retaining skilled and desirable individuals within these markets during the prime of their working lives, as their contributions can significantly contribute to economic growth and prosperity. Nevertheless, certain studies propose that individuals are particularly motivated to repatriate when they believe it aligns with an appropriate age for starting a family (Ralph, 2015). This aligns closely with the timeframe during which individuals are sought after in the labour market, potentially resulting in economic benefits for a state.

(Mahoney, 2009) The assertion emphasizes that individuals who find themselves in the family-making stage tend to view the region where they were brought up as the ideal setting for this significant life milestone. This perspective suggests that there is a distinct connection

between the desire to establish a family and a strong affinity for the environment, values, and perhaps the cultural aspects associated with one's place of upbringing. This inclination to choose a familiar and comfortable setting for family-building underscores the emotional and psychological importance individuals attach to their upbringing and the perceived suitability of their hometown or region for the foundational aspects of family life.

According to the literature, in the scholarly works on migration, it is highlighted that the aspiration to be with one's (future) spouse and initiate a family can significantly influence the decision-making process. This desire serves as a prominent factor that may motivate individuals either to return to their home country or, conversely, to extend their period of stay in a foreign land. The profound impact of personal relationships and the pursuit of family life is recognized as a pivotal determinant shaping migration choice, influencing whether individuals opt for a return migration or decide to prolong their sojourn in the host country. (Bijwaard, 2014)

Religion serves as an influential determinant that may shape individuals' choices regarding return migration, particularly when an individual experiences discomfort with their religious beliefs within a specific state, stemming from a perceived lack of societal approval in that environment (Frederiks, 2015).

(Constant & Massey, 2003) study presents findings supporting the notion that individuals who migrate are more

inclined to return to their home state when faced with unemployment abroad. The researchers highlight a noteworthy observation that migrants prioritize job stability over the sheer magnitude of wages.

Various authors, including (Pirvu & Axinte, 2012) point out that the economic development of a migrant's home state can serve as a significant motivator for their return or the decision to stay. These authors argue that migrants often have the primary objective of accumulating capital, and if the conditions in their familiar home environment offer opportunities for capital accumulation, they are more likely to choose to return to their state of origin. In essence, the economic prospects and opportunities in the home state play a crucial role in influencing migrants' decisions to stay or return.

Methodology

This study adopted a literature-based research methodology, relying on secondary data derived from a comprehensive review of existing literature. The primary sources of data encompassed scholarly articles published in various journals and relevant government publications. The systematic review involved identifying and analysing pertinent studies that shed light on the factors influencing the length of stay for migrants.

Factors Affecting Duration of Stay

Employment Opportunities

The availability of employment opportunities in both the host and home regions significantly influences the duration

of stay for migrants. When the host region offers ample job prospects, migrants may choose to stay longer, driven by the pursuit of better earnings and job satisfaction. Conversely, if employment opportunities diminish in the host region or improve in their home region, migrants may reconsider the duration of their stay, aligning with their pursuit of improved livelihoods. In essence, the interplay between job prospects in both regions shapes the migrants' decisions regarding the duration of their migration journey.

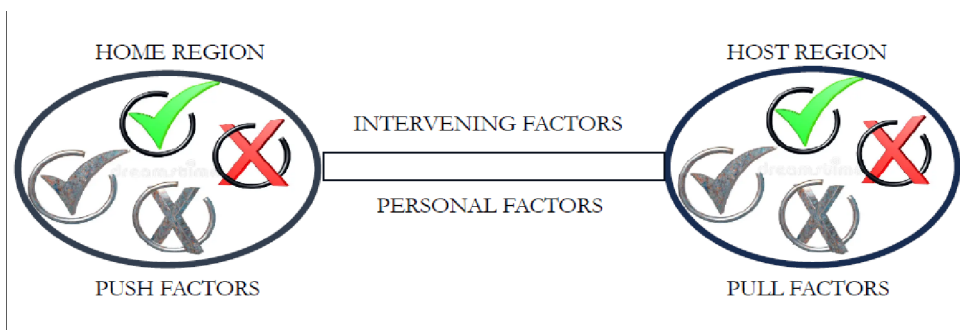
Migration Motive

Migration motives, categorized as push or pull factors, play a pivotal role in determining the duration of stay for migrants in the host region. Those driven by push factors, such as escaping poverty or adverse living conditions, may stay until they achieve economic stability or improved circumstances in the host region. Conversely, individuals attracted by pull factors, such as better employment opportunities or a higher quality of life, might stay as long as these conditions persist. In the case of someone migrating due to poverty, their tenure in the host region is likely tied to the time needed to accumulate sufficient financial resources. Ultimately, the interplay between migration

motives and the realization of desired outcomes shapes the duration of migrants' stays in their chosen host regions.

Conditions in Destination Region

The working, living, and economic conditions in the destination country collectively influence the duration of stay for migrants in the host region. Favourable working conditions, such as job opportunities, fair wages, and job satisfaction, can contribute to a longer stay as migrants seek stable and fulfilling employment. Similarly, improved living conditions, encompassing factors like housing, healthcare, and overall quality of life, may encourage migrants to extend their stay in the destination country. Additionally, positive economic conditions, including a strong economy and prospects for financial advancement, can be significant factors that influence migrants to prolong their duration of stay. Conversely, if working and living conditions deteriorate or economic prospects decline, migrants may reconsider the duration of their stay and potentially seek alternative destinations. The overall balance of these factors shapes the migrants' decisions regarding how long they choose to remain in the host region.



Religion

Individuals for whom religion and religiosity are integral to their identity may reconsider their decision to stay if the host environment does not accommodate their values and beliefs. A lack of support or an unsuitable atmosphere for practicing their faith could lead migrants to explore alternative destinations where they feel more culturally and religiously accepted. Therefore, the extent to which the host region provides a conducive atmosphere for individuals to follow their values and beliefs can influence the length of their stay. In such cases, migrants might actively seek alternative destinations where they perceive a greater cultural and religious acceptance. The willingness of the host region to provide an environment that is supportive and accommodating of diverse religious practices becomes a pivotal element in shaping the migrants' decisions about the length of their stay. In essence, the extent to which the host region fosters a conducive atmosphere for individuals to uphold their values and beliefs significantly influences the overall duration of their presence in that particular location.

Individual Characteristics

Various individual characteristics, including age, education, family type, and the number of dependents, play a crucial role in determining the duration of stay for migrants. For instance, individuals at a stage where family planning is a priority may choose to return to their home country after a specific period. This consideration is often influenced by factors such as age and the desire to be present for significant family milestones.

Furthermore, being the head of a family can significantly impact the length of one's stay in the host region. Responsibilities and obligations to provide for dependents may influence migrants to stay longer or, conversely, to return home earlier based on their family's needs. Education levels can also play a role, as individuals may migrate for educational purposes, and upon completion, they may decide whether to stay for work opportunities or return home. In essence, individual characteristics contribute to the complexity of migration decisions, and the interplay of age, education, family dynamics, and dependents collectively shapes the migrants' choices regarding the duration of their stay in the host region.

Social Capital

The presence and cultivation of social capital, both in the host and home regions, significantly impact the duration of stay for migrants. Social capital refers to individuals' networks, relationships, and support systems within a community. In the host region, a robust social capital can provide migrants with a sense of belonging, assistance, and opportunities, potentially encouraging them to extend their stay. Conversely, in the home region, existing social ties and networks may act as a pull factor, attracting migrants back due to the support and familiarity offered. Additionally, the availability of social capital in the host region can influence the migrants' decision to stay longer, as a strong social network often contributes to a more positive and fulfilling experience. Ultimately, the dynamics of social capital in both regions contribute to the overall duration of migrants' stays,

influencing their sense of connection and well-being in the host region and potentially shaping decisions about returning to their home communities.

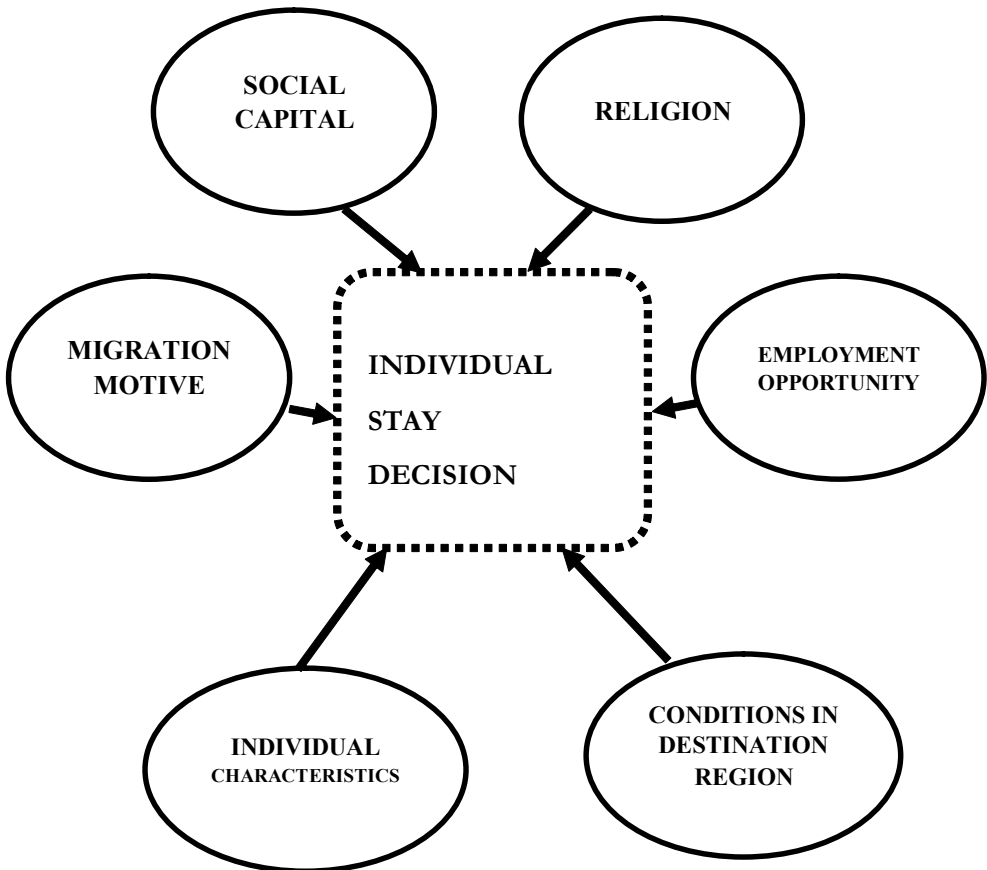
Major Findings

1. The condition in the destination region emerged as a significant factor influencing the length of stay of migrants. Regions offering better living conditions, infrastructure, and overall quality of life tended to attract migrants for more extended periods. Positive environmental factors, such as safety, healthcare, and

educational facilities, played a crucial role in retaining migrants.

2. The role of religious institutions and community support was identified as an essential component in shaping migrants’ decisions regarding the duration of their stay.
3. Social capital, encompassing networks, relationships, and community ties, significantly impacted the length of migrants’ stay. Those with stronger social connections tended to have a more prolonged residence, benefiting from social support

Figure 1



systems, integration, and a sense of belonging.

4. Age, education skills, and language proficiency, played a pivotal role in determining the length of migrants' stay. Highly skilled migrants with better adaptation capabilities tended to establish themselves more permanently in destination regions, contributing to economic and social development.
 5. The motive behind migration was identified as a critical factor influencing the length of stay. Economic migrants seeking better employment opportunities often stayed longer in regions with a thriving job market.
 6. Employment opportunities emerged as a strong predictor of migrants' length of stay. Regions offering diverse job prospects and career advancement possibilities attracted migrants for more extended periods. The correlation between employment stability and the duration of residence was evident across various demographic groups.
2. To attract and retain migrants, policymakers should focus on improving living conditions, infrastructure, safety, and access to essential services in destination regions.
 3. Encouraging diverse religious communities and providing support for integration can contribute to longer stays. Programs that focus on education, skill development, and language proficiency can empower migrants to adapt more effectively.
 4. Government schemes aimed at assisting migrants could potentially contribute to prolonging the stay of migrant workers in the host region, but effectiveness of scheme needs evaluation.
 5. Future research could delve deeper into the interplay of these factors and explore dynamic changes in migration patterns over time. This study underscores the multifaceted nature of factors influencing the length of stay of migrants.

In conclusion, a holistic approach that addresses these suggestions can create an environment conducive to longer stays for migrants. By understanding and catering to the diverse needs of migrants, destination regions can benefit from the positive contributions of a settled and integrated population. Host region can better facilitate migrant's successful integration and contribute to the social, economic, and cultural enrichment of host communities.

Conclusion and Suggestions

1. Community-building initiatives, networking opportunities, and support systems should be promoted to strengthen social capital. This will enhance migrants' sense of belonging, fostering longer-term residency.

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