

Kollam

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Labour Migration to Kerala



KAJYASEVANKATHA
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Construction, cashew, fishing, seafood, brick kilns, mining and hospitality are the major economic sectors in Kollam. They all employ migrant labourers significantly. While local labourers had monopoly in cashew factories, migrants play a major role in private cashew factories now. Kollam has workers mainly from Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Karnataka.

Migrants from Nepal are found working in the hotel industry. Kunnathur, Kottarakkara, Sasthamkotta, Bharanikkavu, Karunagappally, Chavara, Sooranad, Vallikkavu, Neendakara and Sakthikulangara are the major migrant hot spots. Jalpaiguri-Kollam, Cooch Behar-Kollam and Nagaon-Kollam have evolved as migration corridors. Cement pavement blocks and cement brick manufacturing units all over the district engage migrant workers. There are also small industrial units such as food processing, apparel manufacturing and stitching which employ migrants. Scrap collection engages migrant workers almost exclusively.

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, Karunagappally, 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.

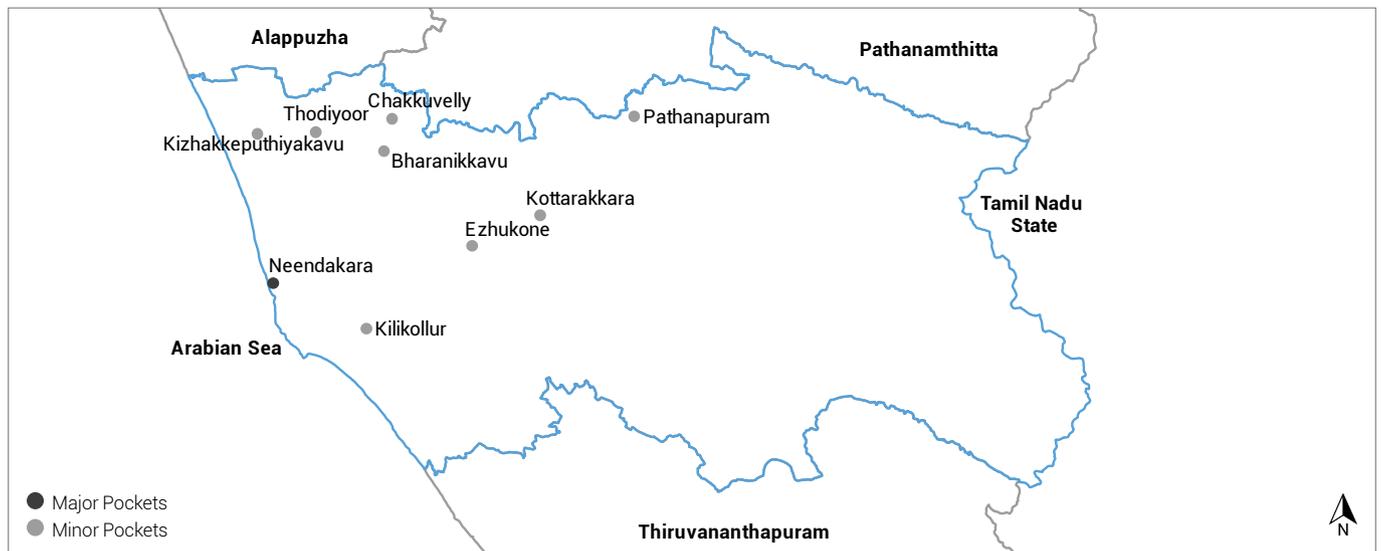
Cashew

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. Thodiyoor, 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 Sakthikulangara 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 Sakthikulangara 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.

Migrant Pockets in Kollam District, 2016-17



Indicative map, not to scale

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.



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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 the period January to June 2017.



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