

COVID-19 and Migrant Labourer : Reflections of Kerala Model of Development

Shafeeque K* and Deeptimayee Rout**

The pandemic Covid-19 has a serious effect on the migrant labour in India. While the country- with a large internal migrant force-failed to administer the situations then prevalent crisis of migrant labour, the state of Kerala invite appreciations from the international community for its proactive measures as well as handling the menace of Corona virus. The success of Kerala needs to be analyzed from a wider perspective that its development strategies-known as Kerala model of development-further inspected. The usage of migrant labourers as guest workers or Atithi thozhilalikal is opened up a new debate concerns the welfare of migrant labourers. The welfare schemes and the model together explored and scrutinized. It has been discussed that the proactive measures are not only the reflections of the model of development adopted by the state, but also as a result of the manifestations of what has been referred as 'new humanism' of the state and its people.

[**Keywords** : COVID-19, Guest Workers, Development, Welfare programmes, New humanism]

* Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Institute of Tribal Studies and Research (ITSR), University of Calicut, Wayanad, Kerala (India) E-mail: <poraishafe@gmail.com>

** Independent Researcher, Pondicherry University, Puducherry (India) E-mail: <deeptimayeerout5@gmail.com>

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1. Introduction

Epidemics had serious effects on the society. It produced hurdles and difficulties for many. Recent years have witnessed numerous outbreaks of cholera, anthrax, yellow fever, and plague. In addition to these known killers, new ones continue to emerge. At least 30 new diseases have been identified over the last several decades (Garrett, 1996). SARS - Severe acute respiratory syndrome - was unheard of before 2003. But it affected more than 8,000 people, killing about one in ten of them, causing fear and panic across the world, and inflicting enormous economic damage, especially in Asian countries. In 2009, a novel influenza virus, H1N1, started to spread, creating the first influenza pandemic of the 21st century. In 2012-2013, a new virus surfaced in the Middle East, causing an epidemic of what became MERS - Middle East respiratory syndrome - that spreads fatally into many countries beyond that region. The Ebola epidemic in West Africa (Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) in 2014 was unlike the previous 24 localized outbreaks observed since 1976. In 2015, the Zika virus triggered a wave of microcephaly in Brazil. Almost 70 countries, one after another, then experienced their own Zika epidemic (WHO, 2018).

India has encountered several epidemics and pandemics throughout history. Several accounts of influenza, cholera, dengue, smallpox and several others have been recorded in recent decades; while we have been able to eradicate some; many diseases still continue to pose a threat to the community. As far as India is concerned, there have been only two major, significant pandemics throughout history. While cholera had been predominant throughout the 19th century with increasing death tolls every year, the influenza pandemic came later on in the early 20th century (Mills, 1986; Ramamurthy and Sharma, 2014). The influenza pandemic was short but devastating and after a long time, quite recently, came yet another flu pandemic by the H1N1 strain (Mishra, 2015).

The spread of pandemic Covide-19 from the epicentre of Wuhan in China has serious implications to worldwide (Sanderson, 2020; Sobacki, 2020; Kinyanjui, 2020; Devakumar *et al.*, 2020; Mays and Newman, 2020). As in many other crises, migrants may be particularly vulnerable to the direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19. Their ability to avoid the infection, receive adequate health care and cope with the economic, social and psychological

impacts of the pandemic can be affected by a variety of factors, including: their living and working conditions, lack of consideration of their cultural and linguistic diversity in service provision, xenophobia, their limited local knowledge and networks, and their access to rights and level of inclusion in host communities, often related to their migration status (Liem *et al.*, 2020).

The Pandemic-Covid-19 affect the labour community in India the most. The complete lock down in the entire country was announced on 24th March for a period of 21 days. Borders were sealed, transportation got stopped, factories, shops, restaurants and all type of the economic activities were shut, barring only the essential services. This proved to be a nightmare for thousands of migrant workers, who lost their livelihoods overnight and became homeless. The immediate challenges faced by these migrant workers were related to food, shelter, loss of wages, fear of getting infected and anxiety. As a result, thousands of them started fleeing from various cities to their native places. Many migrants lost their lives either due to hardship on the way, hunger, accident or co-morbidity and some even committed suicide (Bhagat *et al.*, 2020).

Jan Sahas (2020) shows that majority of the workers were the daily wage earners and at the time of lockdown, 42% were left with no ration, one third was stuck at destinations city with no access to food, water and money, 94% don't have worker's identity card (Jan Sahas, 2020). Sudden lockdown also stranded many migrants in different cities of the country. Those who were travelling were stuck up at stations or state or district borders. Many were forced to walk hundreds of miles on foot to reach their home villages finding no public transport. Those who reached their native villages, were seen as potential carriers of the infection and were ill-treated by the police and locals. In one of the instances a group of returnees were sprayed with chemicals to disinfect them for which the local administration apologized (India Today, 2020). This is one of the biggest streams of mass return migration in the country. The very effort to stave off the pandemic turned into one of greatest human tragedy in India's recent history.

The Indian Express reported on 30th July 2020, "The entire post- lockdown scenario vindicates the fact that the lockdown was a half-baked, knee-jerk exercise that has resulted in an unprecedented human disaster on a scale unseen since Independence. On the one

hand, these workers have lost their livelihoods abruptly. Their hard-earned money - otherwise remitted to their homes to cater to the needs of their families, and means of survival for themselves - was wiped out instantly. Now, shorn of everything, these migrants have been mobilizing the cost of their return journeys home by selling their family valuables. The stringent lockdown is like a double-edged sword for them: Their sources of income have dried up, and the little resources back home are not sufficient to help them withstand the hardship of the situation”.

Both the government and mainstream political opposition failed to make a serious intervention over the hurdle situations of migrant labourers. They even failed to address the question of migrant labourers as a “social” question. Ranabir (2020) argues that “Social Darwinism and neo-Malthusian population policies were now gain momentum to reproduce the country from the effect of disaster with ‘minimum loss’. The prominence was given on ‘productive labour’ and ‘productive economy’ instead of giving emphasis on saving lives by expanding public health systems and social security, including access to food. Although money supply was further enfolded by refusing to directly transfer cash to millions of poor people, credit and loans were given a fillip”.

It is a fact that migrants’ face at most difficulty by losing their income and it is even more to bring the hurdles faced by them during their shift to home. The central government and many state government alleged by the ill-treatment of migrant labourers and failure to bring a policy for helping the poor migrant community. On the other side, there is a different story from the southern state of Kerala. The proactive measures taken to handle the cranky situations of migrant labourers in Kerala became a matter of discussion among the international community. Kerala with its rich heritage in public health and welfare oriented governance- in which welfare measures to the migrant labourer is part-invite appreciations in handling both the menace of Corona Virus and the hurdles of migrant labourers. It is pertinent to note that the success of the state in handling the Nipah outbreak in 2018 exemplifies how well-organized committed health care interventions endorsed by the government as well as non-government agencies with complete indulgence of the public could achieve the desired targets within a short period of time (Kumar and Kumar, 2018).

Times of India reported on 4th April 2020 that while migrant labourers are being forced to leave cities in north India in droves in the wake of the Covid-19 outbreak, the Kerala government has been taking proactive steps to ensure the welfare of guest workers in the state, right from undertaking health screening, delivering food or food items and setting up help desks to allay their concerns. Unlike other states, migrant workers in Kerala enjoy better rights and have greater access to health, education and housing. Further BBC in its panel discussion treasured the success of Kerala in handling its migrant force and esteemed that its policies become a model for the other Indian states to follow. In this context, it is pertinent to understand the fundamental questions that, *firstly*, what is the nature of welfare measures adopted by Kerala state to its migrant force, *secondly*, do we establish the connection between welfare measures and the model of development adopted by the state. We examine this by analysing the way in which the state handled the crisis erupted out by the pandemic Covid-19 and in the process a detailed investigation has put on the proactive measures taken by the government towards the welfare of migrant workers in the state. Further an attempt has been made to substantiate the model of development adopted by the state in administering the crisis driven situations.

2. Historical Development of COVID-19 in Kerala

The first positive case of Covid-19 in India was reported on 30th January 2020 among three students of Kerala, who have returned from Wuhan of China, which is the point of origin of the disease (Narasimhan, 2020). However, all the three positive cases were discharged from hospital in the mid of February. The second wave of cases are reported on 8th March (World Asia, March 2020). To control corona virus spread, the government have started many pre-cautionary majors to control the spread of corona virus in the state. However, on 10th March, the government of Kerala shut down all colleges and schools up to grade 7 (Financial Express, March 2020). Even the government have advised people not to undertake pilgrimages, attend large gatherings such as weddings and cinema shows.

The central government on 19th March gave a call for a nation-wide curfew called Janta Curfew, as the first step (BusinessLine, March 2020). On 23rd March, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced a state-wide lock-down till 31st March to prevent

further spread of Corona virus (Manorama, March 2020). This was before the central government declared a nationwide lock-down. The sudden announcement of lock down has created panic and tension among the migrants, as their only ownership in the form of 'physical labour' will collapse due to lock down. Without having any work, resulted shortage of food and other essential items, the migrants have desperately tried to flee from cities without lack of planning and preparation. Images of millions of Indians walking back to their home town and some of them are losing their lives became the headlines of media.

3. Guest Workers : Not Migrant Workers for Kerala

With the massive spread of COVID-19 epidemic, a number of new words are being used in every-day vocabulary. One of such powerful word emerged in the state Kerala, where the government has started referring the migrant labourers as "guest workers" or "Atithi thozhilalikal". The term was used to commemorate the migrant labourers in Kerala and to honour them for their contributions to the state's labour force and economy. The Malayali's widely accepted such a concept and designate the Guest Workers as 'Bhais' in their day-to-day communication. By calling guest worker the state not only tried to increase their status symbolically, but also tried to intensify their socio-economic conditions. Hence the state has implemented many welfare schemes for the migrant workers.

In order to assess the demographic and socio-economic characteristics, and to implement several welfare programmes for the migrant labourers including education and health, the state Kerala is conducting regular surveys on migration since 1998 (Rajan and Zachariah, 2020). For the welfare of migrant workers, the state has tried to integrate the migrant workers with the host population by constructing a comprehensive and accommodative approach. Kerala is the first State in the country to enact a social security scheme for the migrant workers and has implemented many welfare programmes. Few of the programmes are Aawaz, Apna Ghar, Changathi etc.

For the welfare of the migrants, the Kerala government have introduced 'Inter-state Migrant Workers Welfare Scheme' in 2010. To point out the appropriate beneficiary, the government has made the provision of registration and membership has to be renewed every

year by paying ₹30. The scheme provides a registered migrant four benefits : (i) each registered worker would get up to Rs. 25,000 as health care assistant in case of accident or chronic disease. However, the worker is eligible to get only ₹100 per day and the maximum limit fixed per episode of disease is ₹2000. If the labourers become incapable of working for more than six months due to accidents or chronic diseases, they are entitled to get a special assistance of up to ₹25000. The labourers who have registered in the scheme continuously for three years are also eligible to enjoy a retirement benefit of ₹ 1000 per year subject to a minimum of ₹10,000 and a maximum of ₹25,000. (ii) A migrant worker's dependant would be provided financial assistant up to Rs. 50,000 for death in accident at work site and ₹10,000 in the event of natural death. An additional assistance of ₹5000 to ₹15000 (depending on the distance to the state of origin) is also given for transporting the body to their native places. (iii) The scheme has also the provision to assist ₹3000 per annum for the education of the children of migrant labourers who are studying beyond Class X in Kerala. The scheme is implemented through the Kerala Construction Workers Welfare Fund Board. The migrant worker will be required to pay an annual contribution of just ₹ 30. (iv) As per the scheme, a migrant worker can get termination benefits of ₹25,000 after five years of work (Basheer February 2015). In order to bring more migrants under the safety net of the scheme, the department also started kiosks and call centres with people proficient in Hindi as staff to interact and understand the problems of the labourers and pamphlets and application are issued in Hindi. However, this scheme did not able to reach near all the migrant workers due to some loop holes and structural issues. But the initiative of the state government to institute a welfare scheme for migrant workers, in spite of its weaknesses, brought the invisible migrant workers to forefront of the state's governance (Kumar, 2011).

Immediately after the left government under the governance of the Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, came into power in 2016, the state has launched an ambitious insurance plan named 'Aawz' for the migrant workers. This scheme can be utilized by migrant labourers between the ages of 18 and 60. At the time of enrolling in the scheme, all the, labourers must provide their fingerprint, iris, and other work-related proof. Once these details are provided, the Awaz insurance card can be issued to the worker. The scheme is aimed to provide social security to the migrant workers and also to act as their

database and registry as the crimes involving migrant workers are also rising along with the population. Currently, the plan takes measures to enrol all migrant workers in the states and entitles them with free healthcare (NDTV, July 2016). To provide safe, economical and hygienic rental accommodation for migrant workers, the government of Kerala has also undertaken 'Apna Ghar' project. The first such hostel was inaugurated in Kanjikode in Palakkad in November 2017 with 64 rooms, 32 kitchens, 8 dining halls and 96 bathrooms to accommodate 640 workers. Rooms at the state facility were rented out for ₹750 - ₹1000 per month (Gopika, November 2017). Migrant Suraksha Project is being implemented across the State under the aegis of the Kerala State Aids Control Society among migrant labourers since 2009 mainly to detect HIV+ cases among them and to create awareness and health cards also have been issued to the labourers (The Hindu, March 2016). Many private foundations have their own 'migrant suraksha projects' and even free medical camps which aims to improve the life of migrants working in the state. Exclusive grama sabhas or village councils are planned for the migrant labourers to identify their issues and find solutions (Muringatheri, April 2016).

Leaving health and housing provisions, the government is also trying to give skilled education and is trying to develop literacy among the guest workers. The Kerala government have planned to development a Skill Development Institute for migrant workers (Philip, October 2014). It has already established Indian Institute of Infrastructure and Construction in Kollam city. New centres of Kerala Academy of Skills Excellence (KASE) will be opened soon in other districts. To make a part of mainstream education system, the state education department has opened schools for the children of migrant workers under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Region specific teaching curriculum has to be often adopted as the origin and languages of migrants always differ (The Economic Times, November 2014). The effort to teach the migrant labourers Malayalam and Hindi languages through Literacy Mission is another commendable step from the part of the Kerala government. For it, the government publishes textbooks like 'Hamari Malayalam' textbooks and 'Changathi' and offers classes in most unlikely places such as factories and auditorium apart from anganwadis and union offices, libraries and shelters (Business Line, January 2018).

Such provisions of the government not only will ensure welfare among the migrant workers but will empower them to live with honour among their hosts and will assist them in getting integrated with the local communities. Here it is argued that only schemes made by government cannot integrate the migrants, but support and acceptance from the host community can open the path.

It is observed that socially, Keralites have started to recognize migrant workers as a reality. This is quite visible from a popular television show in which a rural housewife has learnt to speak Hindi to communicate with the migrant workers, whom she encounters in every shop, restaurant and workplace. Even it is found that the migrant workers are very empathetic towards Malayalis. This is quite visible from the words Roshid Ahmed.

“Roshid Ahmed, a migrant worker from Assam engaged at a grocery shop on the outskirts of Perumbavoor town in Kerala, has preferred to stay back. Though his family members are persuading him every day to come back to his native place and some of his colleagues are returning, he has a humane reason for not to leave his workplace. Ahmed revealed that he has a cordial relationship with his Malayali employer who runs another shop, in addition to the groceries. And he doesn't want to leave him high and dry. He viewed that 'My employer hasn't said anything but I know I am free to go. And if I leave, there will be no one to manage the shop'. He replied that most of the migrant workers who decided to stay back consider the state as one of the safest places in the country to see off the pandemic” (Verma *et al.*, June 2020). Such expressions of gratitude are not unusual to see in Perumbavoor or other towns in Kerala where most of the migrant workers have close, cohesive relationships with their natives. On the other hand, the Malayalis also show their gratefulness by denoting the migrants as Bhais, who are hard-working, devoted and frankly. Such a cohesive relationship highlight that by denoting migrants as guest workers the state not only integrated them with host symbolically but it happened in reality.

4. Migrant Workers during COVID-19

The state Kerala is experiencing a massive influx of migrant workers. According to a research study conducted by Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation (Trivandrum) for the Kerala Government

(2013), there are over 25 lakh domestic migrant labourers in Kerala with an annual arrival rate of 2.35 lakhs. Most of them are from West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha. Sixty per cent of them work in the construction sector; the rest work in the hospitality, manufacturing, trade and agriculture sectors. It can be said that every twelfth person in Kerala is a migrant worker from outside the State. The state Kerala has continuously been a model in matters of social sector Development and has received praise for handling a large number of migrant workers stranded by the lockdown. Images of millions of Indians walking back to their home town and some of them are losing their lives became the headlines of media. But unlike other states of the country, most of the migrant labourers of Kerala prefer to stay back during this pandemic. A report highlight that 1.61 lakh migrant labourers in Kerala do not want to leave the state. Even majority of migrant worker stayed peacefully in the quarantine centres without creating any hurdle for the organizer or host community. In such a heterogeneity of migrant population, it is reasonable to ask the question 'Unlike other states, why did the migrant workers in Kerala do not walk back to their home town and stayed peacefully in quarantine centre until the government have arranged transport facilities'.

The Kerala government is trying to explore a humanitarian approach for treating the migrant workers. The state is taking pro-active steps to ensure the welfare of migrant workers in the state, right from providing camps or shelter places, undertaking health screening, delivering food or food items and setting of health desks to alley their concerns. Just after luck down, the Kerala government has opened 4,603 camps housing for migrant workers (Bose, March 2020). The highest number of camps are found in Ernakulum district due to high concentration of migrant workers. In order to provide shelter for migrant workers, the administrators along with the help of local communities have developed a model in Ernakulum, known as 'Ernakulum Model'. However, this model is being used in other parts of the state to properly handle the migrant worker during pandemic. The local self-government bodies were directed to run the camps and the police monitored the activities. All the camps were provided with electricity and water.

Leaving the shelter facility, the government has proposed various ways to supply food to the migrants. For instance in Kannur

district, food is provided to the migrant workers through (1) Kannur Thali (in corporation limits), (2) Community Kitchen (in Municipalities and Panchayats) and (3) Raw Material Kits such as atta or rice, vegetables and oils etc. (Roy, 2020 : 79). The state government used the 'Ernakulum model' to reach out to workers through migrant community kitchens managed by them across the state to ensure no one goes hungry during the national lockdown on 25th march. These community Kitchens are managed by the local community. The government has put the onus on the panchayats to launch a dedicated phone number and deliver cooked food at the doorstep of anybody who dials the number. On 26th march it is declared that 1,000 such community kitchens will be up and each meal will cost ₹20 (Swamy, March 2020).

As like other states of the country, agitations by migrants are also noticed among the migrant workers. On 29th March, hundreds of migrant labourers flooded on the streets of Kottayam town and demanded to go back to their home states. One of the major causes for the discontent was food - the migrant workers weren't happy by the endless supply of rice being served from the Kudumbashree Community Kitchens, which are entirely run by women workers. By understanding the heterogeneity of migrant population and their North Indian originality, the government has decided to provide food as per their taste and choices. In the migrant camps, the menu and rice was being changed. They were provided North Indian dal, chapatis, and pickle along with rice. In some places raw materials (Atta/Rice, Onion, Patatp, Cooking Oil and other vegetables) and cooking facilities were provided and they were encouraged to cook as per their food choices and taste. In some cases the diet were altered as per the food of a particular region. For instance sattu khichdi is served in the camps that had labourers from Jharkhand. The camps provide meals three times a day, apart from tea and biscuits as refreshments (Shanker, April 2020). The Kerala government has also provide free milk through MILMA (Kerala Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation) to all the migrant workers camps and nursery children to solve the problem of additional production of milk while also providing migrant workers a portion of necessary dietary requirements (Nidheesh, April 2020).

In addition, the migrants were provided free essential commodities, including sanitizers, masks, toiletries and medicines.

The migrant workers are also provided carom boards and chess boards for recreational facilities and TV sets for entertainment. Even provision is being made by the government to recharge the phones of migrant workers and the government has tied up with the service provider. “Each labourer can recharge their phone for ₹100-200 a month (Jeemon, May 2020). The main idea behind such facilities is that during lock down the migrant workers can keep contact with their family members”.

In order to increase awareness among the migrant workers, brochures, leaflets and short videos were prepared. As the state has a large inflow of migrant labourers from the state like West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Odisha, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh other than the neighbouring states like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, the printed awareness materials are being prepared in Hindi, Odia and Bengali language. Health workers who could communicate in Hindi were positioned to interact with them and make them understand the gravity of the situation. The information of the number of infected cases and route maps of the patients of GoK (Government of Kerala) Direct, Kerala government’s official app have posted in various languages such as Malayalam, English, Bengali, Hindi, Tamil and Kannada. There is also a dedicated helpline introduced which enables the migrant workers to raise their queries and redress their grievances (Bodhi Commons, April 2020).

To send the migrant worker to their home town safely, the state have requested the central government to arrange transportation facility. After the central government allowed the Sharmik Trains to run, the state has made various provisions. Considering a large number of the migrant population in the state and the current frequency of trains, the state has set up a counselling centre for the workers. There are 20 counsellors at the centre to provide relief. There are 24×7 control room to monitor migrant problems. Every day, a report to the chief minister and the chief secretary with details of whether the concerns were resolved. Even the state government has taken the help of the Mumbai-based research firm, the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), in understanding the migrant workers’ behaviour. The state government also provided food kits and water for all passengers. Before leaving the relief camps, police briefed the migrant workers about the procedures to be followed during their travel and made elaborate arrangements for

transporting them from to the railway station (Jeemon, May 2020). As per the report 1.61 lakh migrant labourers replied negatively to return back their home towns. In this regard the Kerala Labour Minister T P Ramakrishnan said the state will give all legal protection to migrant workers who want to work in the state. “Kerala does not want migrant workers to go back. Those who want to go home can do so. If those who had returned to their states come back to Kerala, the government would offer them all facilities for taking up jobs. The government even started ‘Apanaghar Project’ for providing dwelling places to them at a reasonable rate” (Shanker, April 2020).

5. Reflections of Kerala Model of Development

Kerala governments’ engagement with migrant labourers invite attractions from international community. Many international media including BBC and the Guardian noted government policies on migrant labour. Kerala’s treatment of migrant labour can be understood within the framework of Kerala model of development. The Kerala model of development is a model of development based on the practices adopted in the state of Kerala. It is characterized by achievements in social indicators such as education, healthcare, high life expectancy, low infant mortality and low birth rate, by the creation of productive social infrastructure rather than materialistic infrastructure. Kerala has achieved material conditions of living, reflected in indicators of social development comparable to those of developed countries, even though the state’s per capita income is moderate (Govindan, 2000). Kerala’s transformative experience in education, health, social security, land reforms and decentralized governance has been widely acknowledged as a ‘model’ for other States (Oommen, 1999).

The major concern of this writing is that how the prominent model of development work for the well treatment of migrant labourers. This is of course need to outline that Kerala is known for its trade unionism and labour rights compare to the other Indian states (Nair, 1973). And the state became a reverie place for labourers for its high wage is a repercussion of trade unionism. While many Indian states like Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh deteriorated its labour laws during the lock down to push their industry and finance, Kerala remained with a pro-labour stance is, of course, the strength of trade unionism and communists’ movements.

The proper implementations of housing, education and insurance schemes for the migrant workers shows that the state has no divide in terms of the welfare programmes between the migrants and the hosts. One of the finest example for this is that during the lock down the state has extended its ration to the migrant workers too. The success of Kerala in local administration is made easier to extend state's support and help to the migrant labour. Government exerted its help to migrant workers through local administration. In which the kudumbasree units, asha workers and community health centre played a major role. The timely involvement of local administration restrict the migrant labourer to call for strike and enter into the streets to a great extent. While many Indian states face the hurdles in extending their support to migrant labourers which later culminated into widespread migration of labourers to their homely states created the death of many and endless trouble to them. It has been reported that many migrant labourers who have been shifted to home states wish to come back to Kerala for their ill-treatment in their home states.

The plans and programmes of the state government towards migrant labour is appreciative on many grounds which can be understood as the reflection of the concept of 'guest'. Although it is vague to understand the concept of guest workers merely on material grounds. One has to bring a more subjective understanding of the term. The assessment of migrant labourers as guest workers is part of the 'new humanism' emerged as part of the alternative modernity of the state. Kerala has witnessed emergence of what has been refereed as 'new humanism' especially during the crisis. The new humanism that has been born through young people, labourers, and women was arisen during the floods is largely shaped within the frame of Kerala modernity (Rajeevan, 2018). For instance, guest worker is not just a showy utterance for its people, but a ceaseless effort obliges the concept into practice. The malayalee usages of changathi and bhai to guest workers cutting the boundaries otherness and exclusivity. Treating migrants as guest workers, of course, is the reflection of new humanism that promoted by its people and government. Kerala is known for its humanitarian values which bring down caste and religious based conflict in the state for decades. The welfare and philanthropic oriented activities of political parties and religious organizations are paramount the concept of 'helping other' who are in need of help. Guest workers in Kerala not only

received aid from the government physically but also the helping mentality of other firms like political parties, religious organizations and even the common people's attitude is made a part.

To conclude that while many of Indian states face the hurdles in providing facilities to migrant labourers, the achievement of Kerala can be analysed and discussed as a reflection of the model of development hailed by the state of Kerala. This model of development can be understood from a wider perspective in which state and its people work within the realm of new humanism emerged as part of alternative modernity. Conventionally Kerala model has been understood in terms of the betterment of physical infrastructure. Going beyond, we take the position that a more subjective understanding brings a more fruitful evaluation of social reality and thus challenge the conventional critique of Kerala model of development.

Footnotes

1. *Atithi* means guest and *thozhilikal* means “*mazdoor*” or “labourer”. The term was coined first by the state's Finance Minister Thomas Issac during his Budget speech in February 2018.
2. *Bhai* is a Hindi term denote for brother. It is a commonly used term in the northern parts of India.
3. Insurance scheme for migrant labourers.
4. *Apan ghar* - the term refers as own house. The Apna Ghar project is sponsored by the Government of Kerala to provide houses to the migrant labour in affordable rate
5. *Changathi* Malayalam word refers friend
6. ***Hamari malayalam***, the textbook for the changathi project of the Kerala State Literacy Mission to teach Malayalam to guest workers, has been published as a digital book.
7. *Anganwadi* is a type of rural child care centre in India.
8. *Malayali* - the term is used to symbolise for people of Kerala who use Malayam language
9. As per the ‘Ernakulam Model’ the migrant workers are classified into four categories : (1) The first category of workers are organized labour who worked in establishments and factories before the lockdown. Their camps are structured in their workplaces. The workers are provided raw material such as pulses, vegetables and pickles to contractors. (2) The second category of workers belongs from unorganized sector. Exclusive migrant community kitchens are established for them. Village and ward level migrant management

committees have been formed to look after these kitchens. (3) The third category labourer belong from unorganised sector, particularly the construction workers. The camps are at the construction sites and they are provided with ration kits, which contain rice, pulses and even toothpaste. (4) The fourth category is camps for jobless workers. Further it is found that the diet is tailored to meet different palates. For instance Perumbavoor town has the largest migrant population in the state, most of them are from West Bengal. In this area a Bengali community kitchen was built to cater to them. The administration has made arrangements to monitor the health of the migrant workers. “We have deployed 14 mobile clinics that have doctors, nurses and equipment are deployed. The mobile clinics move from one camp to another camp to conduct regular health check-ups”, The district administration has also set up a call centre to address the concerns of the migrant workers. “Those manning the lines can speak five languages - Hindi, Bengali, Odia, Assamese and Garwahli. The services provided in these camps are also being enumerated and publicised by top leaders and bureaucrats”, Shanker Arnimesh “Rotis, mobile recharges, carrom boards - how Kerala fixed its migrant worker anger”, See *The Print*, April 18, 2020, <https://theprint.in/india/rotis-mobile-recharges-carrom-boards-how-kerala-fixed-its-migrant-worker-anger/403937/>

10. *Thali* is a round platter used to serve food in the South Asia and Southeast Asia. *Thali* is also used to refer to an Indian-style meal made up of a selection of various dishes which are served on a platter.
11. *Kudumbashree* is the poverty eradication and women empowerment programme implemented by the State Poverty Eradication Mission (SPEM) of the Government of Kerala. The name *Kudumbashree* in Malayalam language means ‘prosperity of the family’.
12. *Chapati* also known as *roti*, *safati*, *shabaati*, *phulka* and (in the Maldives) *roshi* is an unleavened flatbread originating from the Indian subcontinent and staple in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, East Africa and the Caribbean *Chapatis* are made of whole-wheat flour known as *atta*, mixed into dough with water, oil optional salt in a mixing utensil called a *parat* and is cooked on a *tava*.
13. *Sattu Khichdi* is dish prepared with roasted and ground powders of cereals and pulses like chana daal, jowar, wheat, oats and barley.

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