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# A Study on Quality of Life Index of Migrant Brick Kiln Workers in Erode District

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## Abstract

Migration within India is a significant and persistent aspect of the country's economy and society. The notion of Quality of Life (QoL), is employed to form an impression of well-being among numerous vulnerable groups of people, such as migrants, refugees, and others. The current study has been conducted among 100 migrant workers employed in the brick kiln industry in the Erode district to examine their quality of life. The study found that about 81% of the migrants have an average quality of life index between 2.5 and 3.5. The average quality of life index has been estimated to be 2.532 which shows that with migration, the quality of life of migrant workers has not improved highly and so government has to take measures to improve their life and well-being.

**Keywords:** Brick Kiln Workers, Migration, Quality of Life, Socio-Economic Conditions

## 1. Introduction

Migration within India is a significant and pervasive aspect of both the economy and society of the country. A total of 450 million people, or 37% of the total population, are counted as internal migrants based on their place of last residence in the 2011 Census. An estimated five to six million Indians moved every year between the years 2001 and 2011, according to the Economic Survey[1]. This resulted in an inter-state migrant population of "about 60 million" and an inter-district migrant population of "as high as 80 million"[2]. The states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh have traditionally been the primary places of origin for migrants because of their high population density and low urbanization levels. The states of Maharashtra, Delhi, Punjab, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala have traditionally been the primary places where migrants have settled after migrating.

Migrant workers who are employed in unorganized industries and who live in polluted and unhygienic environments are more likely to experience health issues and become ill as a result of their working conditions. Those who are employed as migrant laborers on construction sites, metro projects, quarries, mines, and highway projects live in dangerous environments and are susceptible to air and water pollution, which can lead to kidney and lung disorders. The majority of the workers live in open areas or shelters where they have improvised themselves. The workers who migrate to the cities in search of jobs, except seasonal workers, live in parks and on pavements. Residents of slums, the majority of whom are migrants, live in deplorable conditions, with insufficient access to water and poor drainage[3-5]. Accidents that could end in someone's death are caused by a lack of adequate safety measures as well as ignorance of various safety devices.

The aim of QoL is employed to form an impression of well-being among numerous vulnerable populations, such as migrants, refugees, and others. Quality of life is a broad concept that is influenced by the individual's physical health, psychological state, level of freedom, social relationships, and their relationship to significant aspects

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of the surrounding environment. This idea emphasized the fact that quality of life is fundamentally a matter of opinion. Therefore, researching the quality of life of a population is an important step toward comprehending and enhancing the overall health of a variety of vulnerable populations. In this context, the quality of life of migrant brick kiln workers in the Erode district of Tamil Nadu is analyzed.

## 2. Review of Literature

Sundari[6] examined the quality of life of the migrant households in the slum areas of Coimbatore City, Tirupur Town and Chennai City. The study showed that migrant households lived in unhygienic and congested places and did not possess the necessities for a healthy life. It was also found that women and children were the worst affected people physically, mentally and emotionally. Hence, the study suggested that measures to develop the urban environment and health status must be launched. Vinayakam and Sekar[7] examined the quality of life of migrants of Chennai city using factor analysis. The study considered 14 variables. The data had been collected from 305 respondents. The analysis derived two factors namely 'Quality of Life Dimension' and 'Well-being in Life and Work Dimension'. Aishwarya and Nagalingam[8] found that people needed the very best opportunities to migrate with the aim of settling. It was identified that the increasing rate of the migrant population in the state was mainly from the north and they faced language barriers and accommodation facilities problems. The migrant workers worked very hard, were paid very low wages and they were living in very poor conditions. It was concluded that the government and voluntary organizations could implement more schemes and programs to improve their quality of life based on this work. Zabeer *et al.*[9] found that the majority of the respondents were men (95.2%). The smokers had a higher mean score in the psychological domain with a significant P value. The study concluded that the migrant construction workers had poor physical, social, and psychological quality of life. The strategies to improve the physical, social and psychological well-being of this vulnerable population through strict legislation were suggested in the study. Resmi *et al.*[10] analyzed the quality of work life of migrant workers in plywood industries in Kerala, India. A pre-tested semi-structured questionnaire was used and data was collected from 250 migrant workers. The study concluded that the migration process had brought out important changes to the quality of life of migrants.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

- To identify the socio-demographic characteristics of the selected respondents.
- To examine the living conditions of the migrant brick kiln workers.
- To construct a quality of life index for the selected respondents.

## 4. Research Methodology

The research has been carried out with a sample size of one hundred migrant workers from the brick kiln industry in the Erode district selected through a simple random sampling technique. A semi-structured questionnaire is evaluated using a standard questionnaire format. This questionnaire assessed basic demographic profile information as well as quality of life. The principal investigator conducted interviews with the people who took part in the study at their places of employment, and the results have been entered into Excel versions ranging from 1997 to 2003. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS; Windows version 16.0) is utilized to carry out the statistical analysis. All of the variables went through a process of descriptive analysis. The scores for each domain are determined independently, and the transformed score has been derived from the raw score. Simple percentage analysis and Quality of life index are the statistical tools employed in the study.

## 5. Analysis and Discussion

### 5.1 Socio-Demographic Profile and Living Conditions of the Respondents

The socio-demographic background of the respondents is analyzed by considering the variables namely gender, age, educational qualification, monthly income and marital status. The results are shown in Table 1.

It is found from Table 1 that the male respondents made up 60.5% of the migratory population, while female respondents made up 39.5% of the total. The respondents are classified according to their ages, and the results showed 21% of them are less than 25 years of age, 20.5% are

**Table 1.** The socio-demographic background of the respondents

| Socio-Demographic Factors | Particulars | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 60.5 |
| | Female | 39.5 |
| | **Total** | **100** |
| Age | Less than 25 years | 21.0 |
| | 25 – 30 years | 20.5 |
| | 31 – 35 years | 18.5 |
| | 36 – 40 years | 18.5 |
| | More than 40 years | 21.5 |
| | **Total** | **100** |
| Educational Qualification | Primary level | 15.0 |
| | Secondary level | 31.5 |
| | Diploma | 16.5 |
| | Under Graduation | 12.5 |
| | No Formal Education | 24.5 |
| | **Total** | **100** |
| Monthly Income (in Rs.) | Less than 10,000 | 22.0 |
| | 10,000 to 20,000 | 34.0 |
| | 20,000 to 30,000 | 27.0 |
| | More than 30,000 | 17.0 |
| | **Total** | **100** |
| Marital Status | Married | 64.5 |
| | Unmarried | 35.5 |
| | **Total** | **100** |

**Source: Computed**

in the age group of 25-30 years, 18.5% are between 31-35 years of age and 36-40 years of age and 21.5% are above 40 years of age. According to the educational qualification that the migrant respondents have undergone, 15% of them have a primary level of education, 31.5% of them completed a secondary level of education, 16.5% have done diploma, 12.5% of the respondents have education up to undergraduate level and 24.5% of them does not possess any formal education. The monthly income distribution among respondents shows that 22% of the respondents are earning less than Rs. 10000 per month, 34% of them are earning Rs. 10000 to Rs.20000 per month, 27% of them are earning between Rs. 20000 and Rs. 30000 and 17% of them are earning more than Rs. 30000 per month. The marital status-wise classification reveals that 64.5% of the respondents are married and 35.5% of them are unmarried.

The living condition of migrant workers is analyzed by considering the home in which they are living the type of house, number of rooms in the house, type of floor, type of roof, type of lighting, bathroom facilities, details of latrine, type of latrine, drainage facility and drinking water facility are examined. Table 2 gives a picture of the living conditions of migrant workers.

Table 2 shows that 100% of the respondents live in rented homes, 80% of sample respondents live in single-room houses 16% live in 2-3 rooms and 4% in more than 3-room houses. Most (65%) of their houses have mosaic flooring, followed by 23% living in cement flooring and only 12% in tiles. A high proportion of 43% of them have asbestos roofs, 37% with terraces and 20% with tiles. 100% of the respondents possess an electrified lighting system. 45% of the respondents have a bathroom and latrine outside their home, 32% have one inside, and 23% have

**Table 2.** Living conditions of migrant workers

| S. No. | Particulars | Percentage | S. No. | Particulars | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Type of House** | 100 | 6 | **Bathroom** | 32 |
| | Rented | 0 | | Within the house | 45 |
| | Owned | 100 | | Outside the house | 23 |
| | Total | | | Away from the house | 100 |
| | | | | Total | |
| 2 | **No. of rooms** | 80 | 7 | **Details of latrine** | 32 |
| | 1 | 16 | | Within the house | 45 |
| | 2-3 | 4 | | Outside the house | 23 |
| | >3 | 100 | | Away from the house | 100 |
| | Total | | | Total | |
| 3 | **Type of floor** | 65 | 8 | **Type of latrine** | 13 |
| | Mosaic | 23 | | Pit latrine | 12 |
| | Cement | 12 | | Independent | 75 |
| | Tiles | 100 | | Shared | 100 |
| | Total | | | Total | |
| 4 | **Type of roof** | 43 | 9 | **Drainage facility** | 65 |
| | Asbestos | 37 | | Open | 35 |
| | Terrace | 20 | | Closed | 100 |
| | Tiles | 100 | | Total | |
| | Total | | | | |
| 5 | **Type of lighting** | 100 | 10 | **Drinking water** | 32 |
| | Electrified | 0 | | Within the premise | 22 |
| | Non-electrified | 100 | | Near the premise | 46 |
| | Total | | | Away from the premise | 100 |
| | | | | Total | |

**Source: Computed**

one elsewhere. The study also finds the latrine details at respondents' destinations. Most of 75% of the respondents share their latrines. It's followed by pit latrines (13%) and independent latrines (12%). The analysis of the drainage system reveals that 65% of respondents have open drainage and only 35% have closed. 46% of the respondents have to leave their premises to get pure drinking water, while 32% have the facility on-site and 22% have the drinking water facility nearby.

## 5.2 Quality of Life Index (QLI)

The term quality of life denotes satisfaction in needs, well-being, working conditions, and other indicators such as educational level, occupation, income levels, nutritional status, living conditions and so on. The study measures the QLI of the selected migrant mill workers using five indicators. The five indicators are grouped under three headings as shown below.

Social status: (i) Literacy level of the head of the household.

Income and Expenditure status: (ii) Occupation of the female members in the household.

(iii) Annual per capita income and expenditure of the household.

Housing Status: (iv) Type of house.

(v) Number of rooms per person.

To construct the quality of life index table, the actual values of five indicators are converted into a seven-point scale of 0 to 6. The minimum score that an indicator could get is 0, and the maximum is 6. Range and points for each subdivision are fixed arbitrarily. The chief criterion is to include the full range of data in the survey. In some cases, the points represent the data proportionality. In others, the interval between the adjacent two points may not be proportionate to any other two points in that division. The average quality of life index calculated for the migrant mill workers based on the above quality of life index table is given in Table 3 and the average quality of life index in Table 4.

**Table 3.** Quality of Life Index

| Scale Indicator | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Literacy Level | Illiterate | Primary (Class I-V) | Middle (Class VI-VIII) | High School (Class IX-X) | Higher Secondary (Class XI-XII) | Undergraduate, Diploma | Post Graduate and Others |
| Occupation of the Female | House Wife | Casual Labourers | Servant | Agricultural/ Non-Agricultural Labourers(Regular Workers In Unorganized Sector) | Self-Employed | Employed in organized sectors of public or private | Government service |
| Annual Per capita Income (Rs.) | Upto 4,050 | 4,051-5,000 | 5,001-5,400 | 5,401-6,750 | 6,751-10,800 | 10,801-21,600 | Above 21,600 |
| Percentage of Expenditure on Food | 80 and above | 75-79 | 70-74 | 65-69 | 60-64 | 45-59 | <45 |
| Type of House<br>-Roof<br>-Wall<br>-Floor | Rubber Sheet<br>Leaf<br>Mud | Leaf<br>Leaf<br>Mud | Leaf<br>Mud<br>Mud | Asbestos<br>Leaf<br>Cement | Tiles<br>Leaf<br>Cement | Tiles<br>Bricks<br>Cement | Concrete<br>Bricks<br>Cement |
| No. of Rooms per person | 0 | 0.25 | 0.5 | 1 | 1.25 | 1.5 | >1.5 |

**Source: Computed**

**Table 4.** Average Quality of Life Index

| QLI | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number | 0 | 0 | 10 | 81 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2.532 |

**Source: Computed**

Table 4 proves that 81% of the migrant respondents have an average quality of life index between 2.5 and 3.5. The average quality of life index is estimated to be 2.532. This implies the less privileged quality of life of the sample units even after migration.

## 6. Conclusion

Migrants are not familiar with the new environment in which they temporarily live. They face various social, psychological and emotional discomfort. Such situations arise due to fear of neglect by the local community and their focus on the well-being and safety of families living in their native places. Migrants leave their native places for better opportunities and earnings. In many cases, the families in native places depend on the money sent by the migrant who will be the earning members of the family. The present study showed that the QLI of the selected migrants is on average. This shows that even with migration for a better lifestyle their quality has not improved with their migration decision. Hence, the Government has to take effective steps in governing the migrant workers and provide policies for their development.

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