

Urban migration and socio-economic mobility among Indian plantation workers in Malaysia

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1. Introduction

In simple terms migration would denote the physical movement of people from one place to another but more than this it has its social, cultural, economic, political and other dimensions. That is why the process of migration has attracted the attention of scholars in the field of sociology, economics, geography and demography. There is little doubt that a variety of factors have been responsible for migration of people, such as adverse socio-economic conditions in their place of origin and also favourable conditions in the place to which migration is intended. More often the principal direction of internal migration is from rural areas toward the cities and in the direction of economic opportunity. This is attested by most studies on migration that migrants leave their place of origin primarily because of lack of employment opportunities and in the hope of finding better opportunities elsewhere.

In Malaysia, migration has been a continuous phenomenon and the country has witnessed both immigration from outside as well as internal migration. Since the early 19th century, there has been an advent of foreigners migrating to Malaya in search of employment and livelihood. The Chinese came to work in the mining areas and commercial sector while the Indians came to equip the labour needs of the growing agricultural sector. The Ceylon Tamils and educated Indians came to fulfil the needs of the burgeoning government bureaucracy. This large scale immigration which became a common feature in prewar Malaya ceased by the time the country attained independence in 1957 and the immigrants gradually assumed a settled status. The peculiar nature of immigration contributed to the emergence of a compartmentalized population, each residentially based on the occupations that they pursued. The Chinese were mainly in the urban areas, the Indians in the plantations and the Malays, the local people, continued to stay in their villages.

The post independence period saw some unprecedented developments in the rural and the urban sectors of the Malayan economy. Many plantations were fragmented into smallholdings when plantation agency houses began disposing their holdings. Workers who were hitherto maintained by these large plantations were displaced and they sought employment in the urban areas. In the 1960s the possession of work permits was made a compulsory prerequisite for employment of non-citizens and older Indian workers who could not procure or renew their permits were thrown out of employment. The Indian estate population, due to their illiteracy and nonchalant attitude with regard to citizenship, suffered the most. Statistics indicate that between 1957 and 1970 Indian labour force had declined by 7.7% whereas in

the case of the Chinese and Malays it increased by 29.5% and 42.1% respectively. The retrenchment of Indian workers on estates, largely as a result of the subdivision of estates and the introduction of work permits, contributed to this significant decline.⁽¹⁾ Some of these rural workers returned to India while others drifted to the urban areas to make a living.

The urban areas, especially in the post 1970 period, saw a surge of industrial activity with increased foreign investment. Factories began to mushroom at the industrial sites in the country and the demand for labour increased. Young plantation workers moved to these urban centres of employment but the number was never significant to affect labour supply in the plantation sector. However, towards the end of the decade, there was a shift of plantation crop from traditional rubber to oil palm, cocoa and coconut. As less labour-intensive crops, a widespread retrenchment of plantation labour was undertaken. Such retrenched labourers left the estates for the urban areas in search of employment in the factories. Intake of new labour in the estates was also on the decline. Gradually the rural youths who sought higher education or who looked for employment in the urban areas that commensurated their educational achievement left the estate in search of a better life in the urban environment. As a result, outward migration intensified in the 1980s and the plantation sector, for the first time since the pre war days, began to talk of labour shortage.

Indications of this urban drift is reflected in the labour force engaged in agriculture-related occupations. For example, in 1970, of the total Indian working population, their participation in agriculture-related occupations such as tapping, weeding, harvesting, driving or as factory labourers was 125,688 workers.⁽²⁾ This is a significant decline when compared to the 1957 figure of 170,026 engaged in the industry.⁽³⁾ By 1980 it had further dropped to 123,803 workers.⁽⁴⁾ Obviously with increased outward migration of plantation workers in the 1980s, their participation in the sector ought to have dropped to less than 40 per cent by the end of the decade. In terms of population figures too, the rural component of the Indian population which stood at about 610,460 persons or 65.4% in 1970⁽⁵⁾ rose only to 642,841 persons which amounted to 59.0% in 1980.⁽⁶⁾ In contrast the urban Indian population reflected an increase from 322,790 persons or 34.6% in 1970⁽⁷⁾ to 444,730 or 41.0% a decade later⁽⁸⁾. The middle class Indian population in the urban areas, comprising largely of the North Indians engaged in commerce and educated South Indians, could not have possibly contributed to this significant rise in urban Indian population. It is definitely due to the influx of rural migrants. Latest figures are unavailable but based on the trend of migration lately due to push and pull factors a significant fall and increase in rural and urban figures respectively is inevitable.

Internal migration is a phenomenon not only in the Indian community but a process which has affected the other ethnic groups also. In the case of the Malays, it has been largely a rural-rural migration from kampungs to estates and government-sponsored land development schemes like FELDA, FELCRA, KEJORA,

KESEDAR etc., although a significant number did move to the urban areas for purposes of education and occupation. The Chinese, predominantly an urban population, undergo urban-urban migration from small town to cities in sought of better education, job or commercial opportunities. But in so far as the Indians are concerned, it has been a predominantly rural-urban migration. History has shown that Indians had a virtual monopoly of plantation settlements, amounting to almost 90% of the rural labour force in the prewar years, but contemporary developments indicate an erosion of this numerical preponderance. In almost every plantation, be it large, medium or small, there has been this desire among its workers to leave the plantation milieu and seek a future in an urban setting. Parents have been found to encourage their children to procure jobs outside often citing unfavourable conditions in the rural areas. Among youths who have had urban exposure during their period of post primary education, this desire to leave the estate environment had almost become an obsession. In the twenty estates that the writer visited around Sungai Petani (Kedah) and Kuala Kurau (Perak) the youths invariably expressed an intention to escape the drudgery of rural life.

2. Methodology

To identify the motivating factors that have convinced these estate youths to migrate alone would not make the study complete. What happens after they have migrated and settled in the urban areas makes the study more meaningful and pertinent. How they adjust themselves in the new place, their view of their socio-economic attainment and the impact of migration on these individuals' attitudes in general form the focus of this paper.

For purposes of the topic under investigation a case study was undertaken to note the conditions at the source and destination of the rural migrants. Chersonese Estate in Kuala Kurau, Perak was chosen to examine the rural conditions and four urban settlements i.e. Taman Teluk (Butterworth) in Penang, Kampung Tasik in Ipoh, Kampung Sungai Udang (Segambut) and a squatter settlement in Kepong Baru in Kuala Lumpur, where migrants from Chersonese Estate have settled, were studied. A total of fifty-two migrants were identified from the four urban settlements.

In collecting material related to the topic, the personal interview method using a questionnaire was resorted to. Questions on the socio-economic and educational background of the migrants, factors that induced them to leave the estate, job satisfaction and present life conditions were included. Group discussions were also held with these migrants to understand the impact of migration on their lives and whether they recommended outward migration of rural Indian workers.

3. Factors for outward migration

Data collected indicated that most of the migrants left for their present destination in the late 1970s and 1980s. It was not because of their inability to be gainfully employed in the estate but in sought of a better future in the urban areas. They had all worked in the estate for varying periods of time but found life difficult partly due

to the financial constraints but more to the monotony of estate work and uninspiring environment of plantation life. It is no bucolic paradise nor can it provide the challenging atmosphere for a hardworking individual to reap the fruits of his labour. Experience has no bearing on the income of the workers for the plantation wage structure relies principally on the basis of fixed daily basic wage coupled with a pittance of a variable income which includes a latex bonus and a scrap bonus. Together they provide an income barely sufficient to meet the essential needs of the worker's family⁹. The concept of annual increment and bonus is made alien to workers but a desirable benefit for the management staff.

Many of the migrants cited their inability to fruitfully utilise their "off work" hours since work usually finished by early afternoon. In terms of recreation facilities the estate environment has none or is deficient and similarly so for those interested to carry out some form of business activity to supplement their income. The estate community does not provide a suitable market for viable business ventures. As such the leisure time of the workers was invariably spent in the company of the same people and the same conversation topics belaboured. Quite a high percentage of these youths succumb to the lure of illicit alcohol or samsu and become inveterate drinkers. In Chersonese Estate almost 70 per cent of the male workers drink with about 40 per cent having become alcoholics.¹⁰ Concerned parents, fearing the danger of this bane of plantation workers, have encouraged their children to move out of their natal environment.

Youths who have left the estate and found for themselves a better life in the cities often come back to their former estate to visit remaining family members, relatives or friends. They bring back interesting stories of urban life. Exposed to such information about abundant job opportunities and the sure possibility of making it good in the urban areas, the rural youths gradually get attracted to the idea of moving out and eventually drift to the urban industrial centres.

Another group of youths who have expressed the desire to leave the estate comprise those who have had urban exposure caused by higher educational needs. With the retention rate in schools having risen considerably in the post 1970 period among estate youths, at least four years of secondary education is often obtained in the urban schools.¹¹ Their acquaintance with urban environment during this period of their life induces them to start their working life in an urban setting. They are able to see a significant difference in the style of life in the urban and rural areas and consequently decide for a life in the latter environment.

4. Socio-Economic Conditions

The socio-economic attainment of the rural migrants is pertinent to the study for it is this aspect which indicates whether urban migration is a welcome feature for rural Indian plantation workers. The fact that a significant difference in the socio-economic conditions of the workers' past and present exists is a clear indication of an eventual upward mobility of these migrants.

4.1. *Occupation*

It was found that most migrants had already acquired a job in the urban area through a friend or relative before leaving the estate. Only a few, 11.5 per cent, came to the towns first and later procured their first jobs. These contacts through whom jobs were obtained were persons who had left the estate earlier and settled themselves in the towns. Their frequent visits to their natal estates provided the necessary link through which information flowed about job opportunities in urban factories. Such network arrangements showed that most migrants often went to places where are found some familiar persons such as relatives or friends who had migrated earlier. As such, distance had never been a criteria in the choice of intended migration as evident for youths from Chersonese Estate in Kuala Kurau (Perak) who had not only gone to Butterworth and Ipoh but also to Kuala Lumpur.

Responses recorded show that 76.9 per cent of the rural migrants had invariably switched from one job to another in the initial period following migration. Eventually they acquired a permanent job in which they had served between five to ten years. Some have worked as gardeners or factory workers before acquiring a driving licence to work as lorry drivers. As lorry drivers in big factories, their incomes which ranged from \$600 to \$800 a month appeared lucrative. Others have served as labourers or foremen before being promoted as store keepers. Five of the migrants indicated having obtained a lorry driving licence before leaving the estate and upon arrival in the town quite easily obtained a job. there were also 32 others (61.5 per cent) who have been continuously employed in the same urban factories for about ten years and subsequently acquired a permanent job status. The fact that rural migrants were able to switch jobs with ease meant that in the urban areas the demand for manual labour is great. Similarly the wives, too, have a wide range of jobs which needed their services. This included working as maids or as general workers in furniture, plastic, garment or electronic factories. A few 19.2 per cent) of the women had stopped working with the birth of children in the family while others continued to work after childbirth having made arrangements for "baby sitting" their children.

With regard to activities to supplement family income most of the migrants (48 persons or 92.3 per cent) did nothing in this direction. They often mentioned the problem of not having the time to carry out part time activities as work in factories or as drivers commenced in the morning and ended in the evening and sometimes required them to undertake overtime work. With wives, too, working, most husbands found it unnecessary to do any other odd jobs to supplement their income as they had to devote time for their children and for themselves. The fact that almost all these migrants expressed satisfaction with their present job and family income is an indication that the necessity to undertake part time employment does not arise. It appeared that initial capital to start some business venture was never seen as a problem as

reflected in their savings. As such it is not so much the lack of urge, interest, experience and courage but the constraints of time which deters such involvement

In terms of other non-pecuniary and pecuniary benefits derived from urban employment all the immigrants noted better health care facilities in the form of clinics and hospitals, social security, annual leave of 14 to 21 days, monthly salary, year-end bonus, annual increments and even promotional prospects to supervisory positions in factories. Plantation owners have not yet considered offering such occupation-related benefits for their workers and as such indirectly contribute to the urban drift.

4.2. *Income, Savings and Ownership*

In so far as income is concerned, migrants earned comparatively better wages. In the initial years following migration their income ranged from \$250.00 to \$300.00 but with annual increments, most of the male factory workers earned incomes exceeding \$600.00 after about ten years service. Those working as lorry drivers earned around \$800.00 a month. Working wives further augmented family income and such migrant families declared an average household income of not less than \$750.00 per month.

The high income of these migrants is reflected in their savings which ranged from \$500.00 to \$2000.00 invested in cooperatives or kept as cash in post offices and banks. Realising the importance of savings to meet exigency needs many of these families subscribed to a pattern of monthly savings. One respondent indicated having saved \$1,000.00 in a cooperative society for his children's education but the majority, 86.5 per cent or 45 persons, who saved expressed a keen desire to purchase a house in one of the urban housing schemes. These migrants have considered their stay in the squatter settlement as temporary as they hoped eventually to move to their new house.

Some of the new migrants, 15.4 per cent, had already purchased a squatter home with their savings in the plantations before they came to the town. But most continue to rent a home while at the same time gradually saving to purchase a house either in the squatter settlement or elsewhere. Thus house ownership had become an important necessity among these migrants and many of them claimed to lead a frugal life in order to attain that dream of owning a home.

As urban residents who enjoyed the benefit of public amenities like water and electricity, these new migrants have acquired an assortment of household items which would appear as luxury goods in the rural areas. Almost all were in possession of colour television set, radio and/or hifi set, video cassette recorder, fridge, sewing machine, furniture and motorcycle. These migrants explained that most estate households in Chersonese Estate had only some of these electrical items because of the disadvantage of supply of electricity

which is available for only certain periods of time in a day. In the urban areas, they were able to enjoy a continuous supply of electricity and as such avail themselves of these household items. The credit facilities available to urban residents also makes purchases of such electrical items a possibility.

4.3 *Expenditure and Debt*

When compared to rural expenditure patterns, there is obviously a sharp increase in household expenditure. The urban resident had to pay for rental of house, electricity bills, transport expenses when commuting to work and other occasional expenses. The cost of living is definitely higher in the urban areas for a manual labourer but the fact that he also derived a better income than his rural counterpart makes it possible for him to make ends meet and in most cases have an excess which he saved. These migrants, despite their little education, appear to have given serious thought about their future and that of their children and as such have fewer children as compared to their parents. Such considerations assist them in planning for the future as a small family naturally incurs less expenditure. The amount of money spent on food and other items does not indicate high expenses, attributed partly to the fact that the children of these new migrants are still young.

The new migrants claimed to keep away from the bane of rural Indians, consumption of alcohol, and this has helped greatly to reduce expenditure. Unlike in the rural areas where the workers, on the average, spend about \$5.00 a day for consumption of *samsu*, the migrants, only a small number, (19.2 per cent) consume beer occasionally. It appears that among new migrants, consumption of alcoholic beverages has not become a serious social problem as in the estates.

A study of their expenditure patterns indicated a good proportion of their expenses went for food followed by money spent on education of children and repayment of debts. Unlike rural folks, the new migrants do not owe to individuals as most of their debts are to financial institutions. They had taken loans to purchase household items like television, motorcycle or video cassette player or as indicated by one migrant that he had just taken a bank loan to buy a low cost house. A lorry driver had taken a housing loan to buy a medium cost house. Thus migrants, in their desire to own a house and to enjoy the luxuries of urban life, have become institutional borrowers.

Thirty two of the respondents indicated regular remittances to their parents in the estates during the initial four to five years after migration. However, such contributions to the natal family ceased upon marriage as responsibilities to their own families increased. Even the frequency of their visits to the estate gradually decreased over a period of time as their commitments to their job and own family became greater.

4.4 *Amenities*

As most squatter settlements are located quite close to urban areas, the residents have the advantage of access to public utilities like water supply, electricity, telephone and transport system besides the benefit of access to the large urban temples, better equipped schools and medical facilities which are superior in quality as compared to rural areas. The migrants from Chersonese Estate who have settled in Taman Teluk, Taman Tasik, Kampung Sungai Udang and Kepong Barn all enjoy the full benefit of these utilities. For example, they have a continuous supply of electricity which encourages the purchase of electrical goods which are essential items to lead a modern life style. Every household of these new migrants has a television, video cassette player, fan, blender, mini-compo and fridge, household items that can be utilised in their former place of stay at only specific periods of the day.

Similarly, water supply has not been denied to settlers of these settlements. Although they do not enjoy the privilege of individual pipes connected to their homes, migrants do get their supply of water daily. Some common pipes are laid by public authorities in strategic places to meet the needs of these homes and each house is allocated an hour a day to replenish its water tank. In this manner, this basic need is also met besides the provision of clear water.

However, unlike in estates, these squatter settlements do not have the services of sweepers to clean up the dirt that is discarded by the residents. A casual look at the interior of these migrants' homes evinced a fully furnished house that is clean. But a sight that will definitely bother an observer is the lackadaisical attitude exhibited by settlers in the maintenance of cleanliness outside their home. The fact that garbage and filth is thrown about everywhere and the lack of interest among the residents to clean their surroundings smacks of an indifferent attitude toward environmental cleanliness. Sanitation in settlements resemble to some extent the sanitary conditions of fragmented estate settlements. It appears that such nonchalant attitude with regard to cleanliness of their surroundings is a result of the "hangover" effect of plantation life. Those estates owned by big plantation companies, as for example Chersonese Estate, would have degenerated into "ghettoes" if not for their compliance to statutory regulations regarding health conditions. Hospital assistants employed by these estates make daily rounds inspecting cleanliness and the sweepers clean up daily what the workers and their children have discarded. In fact it had become the expectation of the workers that the maintenance of cleanliness of their living environment is the sole responsibility of the estate management. Inhabitants of these squatter settlements, invariably former plantation workers, exhibit this complete lack of interest in environmental cleanliness and heaps of filth strewn everywhere is a common sight there.

4.5 *Education*

Most of the new migrants', 78.8 per cent, had only a primary education in the Tamil medium and had dropped out of school for a variety of reasons ranging from lack of interest to pursue further to failing the examinations and forced to quit school. Despite their poor grounding in education, these migrants evince a greater interest in the education of their children. Not only do they send their children to kindergarten but they do keep constant checks on their children's work in school by checking their workbooks regularly and making occasional visits to meet the teachers and discuss about the children's educational performance. But twenty-five migrants (48.1 per cent) admitted that due to pressure of work which required them to constantly work over-time, they were unable to check on their children's school work and so depend on their wives for such supervision.

On the whole, the study showed that parental interest in their children's education is definitely present but how that interest needs to be translated into behaviour patterns so that the children enjoy the full benefits of that concern has only partially been realised by these new migrants. In terms of time devoted and attention granted to children's education, these urban parents seemed to have understood the importance but they failed to envisage the difficulties that their children will confront as a result of the medium of instruction. For reasons determined by their sentiments, all these new migrants continued to send their children to the vernacular schools. Studies have shown that the proficiency of Tamil school pupils in the national language, Bahasa Malaysia, is extremely poor given the time allocation for this subject.⁽⁹⁾ During the transition period to secondary school, one year of intensive instruction in Bahasa Malaysia is given to these children to emplace them on a par with other children who have had six years of education in Bahasa Malaysia. With the expectation that six years of accumulated deficiency can be remedied in one year is not only poor educational planning but reflects also the community's indifferent attitude pertaining to the repercussions of such a system. The social manifestations and psychological trauma caused by language deficiency contributes to an overwhelming dropout rate among these children.

These new migrants, as Tamil educated individuals, continue to desire a vernacular education in the primary level for their children before they proceed to Bahasa Malaysia medium of instruction at the secondary level. Admitting the shortcomings in the rural Tamil schools, they express an opinion that the urban Tamil schools are better equipped and as such their children ought to do better in their studies. In spite of this positive attitude and confidence that they have about the urban school, they appear to lack the confidence that their children could pursue their studies to obtain a professional qualification. This became obvious when they were posed with the

question about what occupation their children ought to take up. Although 28.8 per cent responded in favour of a professional career like medicine and law, a good proportion (61.5 per cent) of these migrants indicated a teaching job for their children which they claim would be a great achievement. Though this desire indicates a realistic approach toward their children's ability, it also reflects an inadequacy to see that potential for success in their offsprings. They hope that the attainment of at least a teaching career by their children will provide scope for further enhancement subsequently by their grandchildren.

5. Attitudes toward Migration

In order to gauge the extent to which out-migration has affected the life styles of the migrants it was thought desirable not only to assess the socio-economic changes that had occurred in the life of those plantation workers who resorted to migration but also to understand the migrants' attitudes toward that process which has caused change in the socio-economic sphere of their life. Questions pertaining to their attitudes revealed positive impressions of their life after they had left the estate environment.

With hardly any exception, the new migrants from Chersonese Estate admitted that they were better off than their parents and other rural workers in terms of income and lifestyle. Most of them made comparisons with their peers in the estate and expressed a sense of relief that they had extricated themselves from rural life. Their occasional visits to their natal estate have made them feel sorry for those who are still reluctant to leave the estate environment. For these migrants life in the estate imposes a lot of constraints which hinder personality development and subsequently does not contribute favourably to the worker's economic progress. Estate management's ruling that forbids animal husbandry, absence of beneficial personality-building leisure-time activities and widespread indulgence in consumption of illicit alcohol by workers which eventually influence the youth population are all ingredients that do not augur well for the constructive development of a rural community. But in the urban areas, they are able to see a wide world of opportunities for the hardworking rural youth. Access to better socio-economic conditions, educational facilities and entertainment coupled with exposure to a variety of people and lifestyles had made a significant impact on the personality development of these new migrants. Ability to converse better in the Malay language and cultivation of friendship with persons of other races have made them better individuals in the sense that it had developed self-confidence and given them access to information necessary for amelioration of their life. Their children are also exposed to a variety of people, events and situations and as parents, they see a remarkable change in the attitudes and thought patterns of their children.

With regard to whether they were happy with their present life, an overwhelmingly positive response, 96.1 per cent was noted. In fact, they regretted why their

parents had not left the estate earlier. Although outward migration did impose certain constraints and difficulties in the initial period due to adjustment problems, these difficulties were overcome gradually and the migrants settled rather comfortably in the new setting. The basic socio-cultural needs pertaining to religion and education was fulfilled eventually by the presence of institutions catering to those needs in and around their locality.

The leisure time activities of these migrants have also seen a significant change in that they not only have gained membership of political parties, clubs, welfare associations, unions and cooperative societies, they watch more television programmes and have a wider variety of friends. Once luxury items have now become essential for pastime activities of the family. Though the family spends about three to four hours daily watching television, the migrant himself, as a full time employee with regular overtime work only spends about an hour or more watching television. Daily subscription of newspapers in many families have also kept them informed of current developments and in terms of general knowledge evince a significant difference as against their rural counterparts.

It is the contentment of having established for themselves a better life than their parents and their friends who have stayed behind in the estate that all the migrants expressed unanimity indicating that plantation workers should gradually leave the estates. They spoke of "slave labour" conditions in the estates where they were unable to voice their grievances against the management, spoke of amenities which was either deficient or absent and expressed dissatisfaction at the fixed amount of wages provided in the estate for all workers irrespective of experience. These migrants talked of a newly-found freedom against the watchful eyes of estate management whose various restrictions slowly but surely worked into the minds of these youths, some of whom see plantation life as restrictive, boring and uninspiring.

6. Conclusion

There is little doubt that both migration and social change are reciprocally related since rural migrants not only change their way of life but also carry the message of social change to their natal estate. In the same way that migration initiates a number of changes, both social and demographic in the recipient community, so does social change which initiates migration from the donor community. Migration is thus both a consequence and a cause of the process of social change in both places.

Qualitative changes in demographic structure in the donor community is also an inevitable phenomenon seen in the preponderance of males migrating out of the estate. Statistics indicate that there are more women in the rural labour force than men. Of the males who gradually leave the estate, the youths significantly predominate in the process leaving behind the parents and those youths who have succumbed to alcoholism. The ultimate result of such outmigration is a rural Indian population comprising of older folks, women, children and deviant youths.

The positive implication of this process of migration lies in the opportunity it provides for other members of the migrants' family to come to the city. Whether it is for education or occupation, the rural migrant sets in motion the initiative for his siblings, parents and even relatives and friends to escape from the "captive" environment of the estate. This sort of chain migration eventually results in enlargement of cluster of kith and kin in the city and the fact that the squatter settlements studied have groups of interrelated families living together is testimony of this process.

With passage of time, commitments to job and family in the new place gradually affects their relationship with place of origin which undergoes a greater degree of detachment. the frequency of their visits also gradually decline. This break in ties is usually offset by forging of new alliances with friends in the settlement. Migration replaces primary contacts with secondary ones and so does not lead to any form of psychic insecurity among them in the cities. In fact their positive response toward migration is already an indication of their capacity and facility for adaptation in a different environment with new people who do not necessarily share the bonds of common beliefs and customs developed through generations of sharing a sense of community.

In this study, it has been observed that rural migrants have been able to adjust themselves comfortably in the urban socio-cultural scene besides attainment of a socio-economic position far better than their previous status. That the urban environment is able to provide all these needs and satisfy their aspirations for a better life answers some of the basic questions confronting the issue of outmigration from estates.

Footnotes

1. *Population and Housing Census of Malaysia, 1970*. Kuala Lumpur, Department of Statistics, 1972, pp. 437-438.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 436-440. Total agricultural workers included also those engaged in forestry, hunting and fishing but for purposes of calculating plantation workers only those employed in agricultural products requiring substantial processing were taken into account. Thus the figure of 125,688 workers.
3. *Population Census of Malaya, 1957*. Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1958.
4. *Malaysia, Population and Housing Census, 1980*. Kuala Lumpur, Department of Statistics, 1981, pp. 465-530

5. *Population and Housing Census of Malaysia, 1970*, p. 300. The total rural Indian population was 610,460 persons or 65.4 per cent which included 510,363 Indian Tamils, 29,932 Telegus, 28,949 Malayalis, 12,467 Punjabis, 118,054 other Indians, 5,785 Pakistanis, 5,930 Ceylonese Tamils and 980 other Ceylonese, but for purposes of plantation labour, only figures for Indian Tamils, Telegus and Malayalis needed to be taken into account. Thus the figure of about 550,000 persons.
6. *Malaysia, Population and Housing Census, 1980*, p. 148.
7. Malaysia Census, 1970, *op. cit.*
8. Malaysia Census, 1980, *op. cit.*
9. Plantations which abide by MAPA-NUPW Agreement (1986) pay the following rates:

Basic Daily Wage	RM7.90
Later Bonus (in excess of 10kg a day)	31 /kg
Scrap Bonus	15 /Kg
10. Alcoholics usually spend about RM5.00 - RM7.00 a day on samsu, which constitutes a substantial amount of his income.
11. After six years of vernacular education, the Tamil school children are enrolled in the Remove Classes before proceeding to Form 1, 2 and 3 where their fate for further education is determined. Invariably more than 80 per cent of these children fail and drop out of the school system at the age of 16.
12. A research report submitted by Mohd. Kaddyran to the Faculty of Education, University of Malaya in 1979 indicated a dismal performance in Bahasa Malaysia in the Sijil Rendah Pelajaran Examination by Indian candidates in two schools in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur with Tamil school background. Similar performance was also noted in an analysis of the Std. 5 Assessment Examination (1989) results for Tamil schools in the country.