

Thiruvananthapuram

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Labour Migration to Kerala





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Economic sectors in Thiruvananthapuram include information technology, transportation, hospitality, construction, fisheries, textile and apparel including handlooms, coir as well as mining and quarrying. There are also several public sector enterprises located in the district. Numerous small industrial units also function here. Except the traditional sectors such as handloom and coir, most sectors engage migrant workers. Unlike in other districts, marine fishing in Thiruvananthapuram does not engage migrant workers in large numbers. Construction is a major sector of employment for the migrants. West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Odisha, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh are the major source states. Hospitality sector has people from Tamil Nadu, northeastern Indian states, Darjeeling district in West Bengal, as well as from Nepal. Food processing units, pavement block manufacturing units and cement brick manufacturing units scattered in the district engage migrant workers. Kazhakkootam, Menamkulam, Vizhinjam, Pothenkode and Neyyattinkara are the major clusters that have been identified. Gandhi Park in East Fort is a meeting place of these migrants during weekends.

Construction

Thiruvananthapuram is a major hub of construction activities in Kerala. The Kazhakkootam-Kovalam stretch of the city bypass is the main hot spot of construction activities. In addition to the IT parks, hotels, convention centres, commercial parks and several infrastructure projects are also coming up. Widening of Kazhakkootam-Mukkala National Highway bypass and Vizhinjam Container Terminal are the mega government projects in progress. All construction activities depend on migrant workers. A majority of the workers in the government-commissioned projects are from West Bengal, Assam, Odisha, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.

Workers from Malda, Murshidabad, Jalpaiguri in West Bengal, Dhubri, Nagaon, Dibrugarh in Assam, Bhadrak, Balasore, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Kendrapara in Odisha, Shahjahanpur and Rampur in Uttar Pradesh, and Latehar and Deoghar in Jharkhand can be found in the construction sector. People from Kanyakumari, Dindigul, Theni and Madurai in Tamil Nadu also work in this sector.

Textile and Wearing Apparel

The handloom industry in Thiruvananthapuram engages only local labour. Apparel units located in the Apparel Park under the Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation at Menamkulam employ both native and migrant workers. Most of the migrants are from Odisha and Jharkhand. Both men and women work in these companies and most of them have been recruited through an entity facilitated by the National Skill Development Corporation. Companies also run health clinics and crèches. There are hostels for single women inside the park. Women with children or families stay outside the park premises.

Hospitality

Thiruvananthapuram district is also a major tourist destination. The hospitality industry is a significant contributor to the district's economy. Hotels, resorts and restaurants, including small eateries, engage migrant workers. Thiruvananthapuram city, Kazhakkootam bypass, Kovalam, Poovar and Varkala are some of the areas where hotels and restaurants are clustered. Most of the migrants working in the hotel industry are from Tamil Nadu, northeast India or Nepal. People from Assam, Mizoram, West Bengal, Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Jharkhand can be found working in the hotels. Men from Konyak tribe of Nagaland were also found working in a hotel in the city.

Mining and Quarrying

The sector is stagnant due to the restriction on mining. However, some of them are still functional. There is a major cluster of quarries in Mukkunnimala in the district and people from Assam can be found working here. Brick kilns too engage migrant workers. Neyyattinkara is a centre of brick kilns in the district. These kilns have workers from Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha, Assam and Jharkhand.

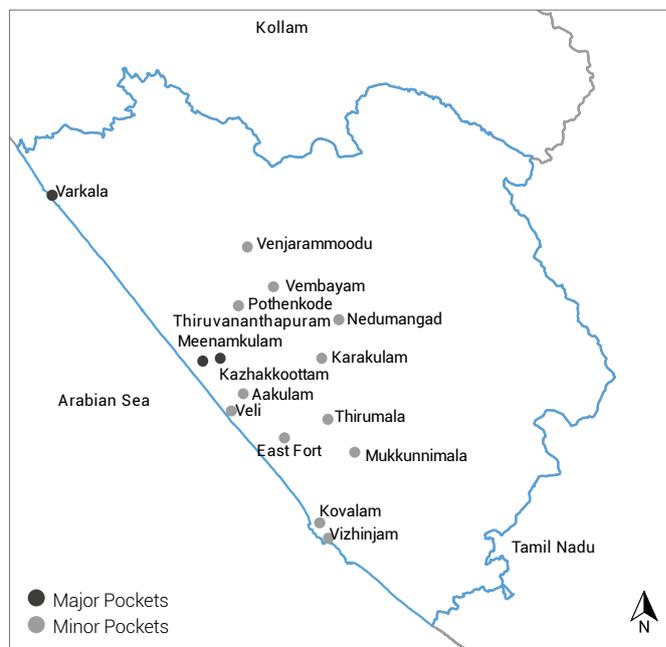
Labour Nakas

The East Fort junction bus stop is the largest labour *naka* in the city. Labourers from West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Odisha and Jharkhand come here looking for work. Junctions and small towns like Kazhakkootam, Ulloor, Pulayanarkotta, Nedumangad, Pothenkode, Nettayam, Neyyattinkara, Sreekaryam, Venjaramoodu and Kallambalam have *nakas*.

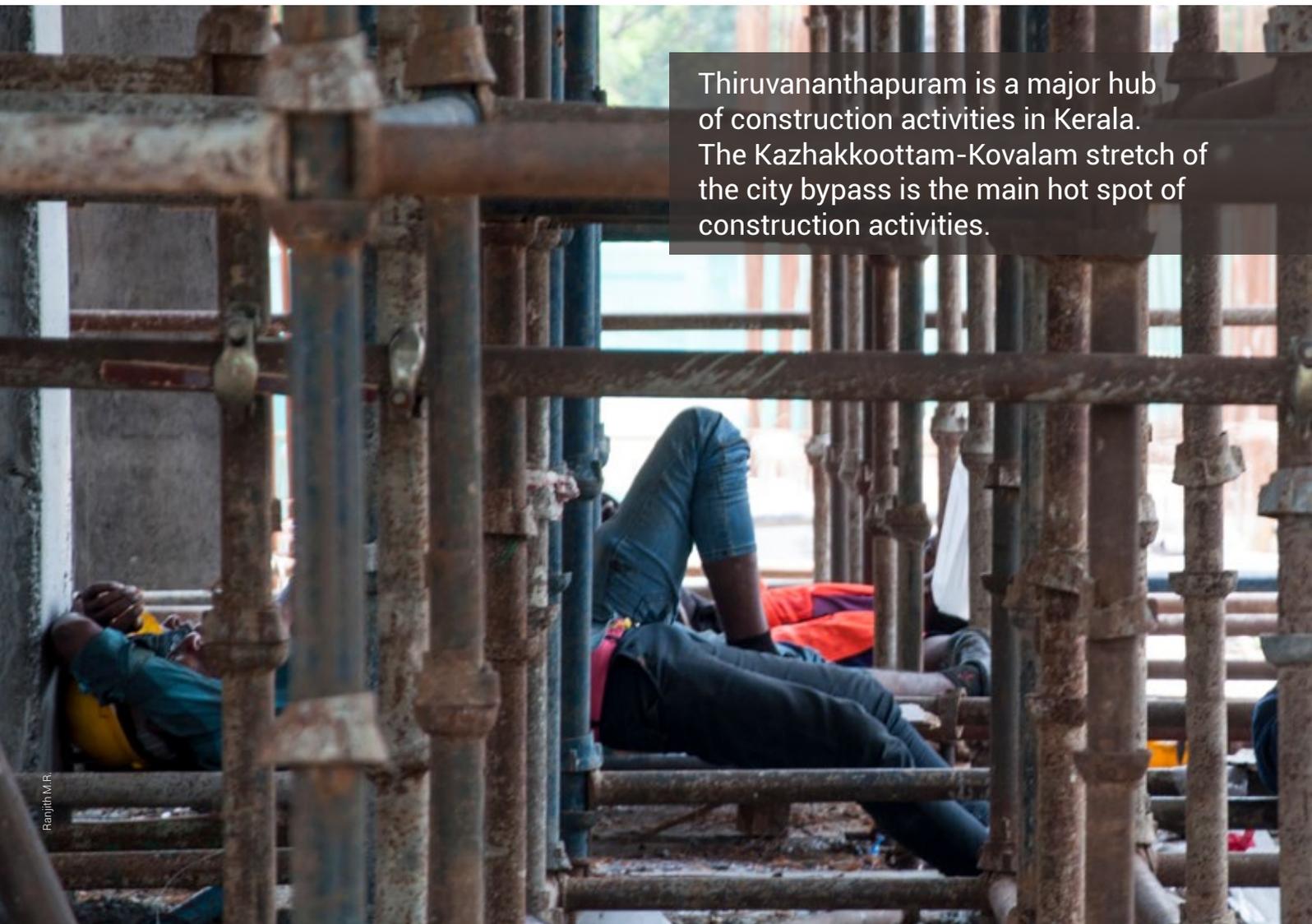
Residential Pockets

Kazhakkootam is a major residential pocket of migrant labourers. Lanes and bylanes at Kazhakkootam that go inside from the right side of the bypass towards Kovalam is where hundreds of workers live. Thirumala in Nemom area is the other major residential pocket in the city. Veli, Meenankulam, Mukkunnimala, Aakulam, Pothenkode, Karakulam, East Fort, Vembayam, Nedumangad, Venjaramoodu, Kovalam, Vizhinjam and Varkala are some of the other residential areas of migrant workers in the district. In most of these areas, workers stay in rented rooms or on the premises of the construction sites.

Migrant Pockets in Thiruvananthapuram District, 2016-17



Indicative map, not to scale



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Mining and quarrying depends on migrant labour. Mukkunnimala is a major cluster of quarries in Thiruvananthapuram district.

October 2017

Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development

CMID is an independent non-profit think tank devoted to migration and inclusive development, advocating for and promoting the social inclusion of migrants. CMID provides evidence informed solutions for mainstreaming inter-state migrant workers in India. This district brief was prepared based on a qualitative research undertaken by the authors across the 14 districts in Kerala during November 2016–May 2017. The study was funded by Thummarukudy Foundation. CMID also acknowledges the fellowship provided to the authors by Aajeevika Bureau during January to June 2017.



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