

Leveraging Digital Finance for Women Migrant Laborers in Kerala: Empowerment, Block chain and Financial Inclusion study of migrant women in Thiruvalla municipality

Ms. Reshmi Susan Jacob¹, Dr. M.Muruganathan²

¹Research Scholar, (Part time), Department of Economics, Vels Institute of Science Technology and Advanced Studies (VISTAS), Chennai.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Vels Institute of Science Technology and Advanced Studies (VISTAS), Chennai.

Cite this paper as: Shamuratova Nagima Genjemuratovna, (2025) Leveraging Digital Finance for Women Migrant Laborers in Kerala: Empowerment, Block chain and Financial Inclusion study of migrant women in Thiruvalla municipality. *Journal of Neonatal Surgery*, 14 (25s), 399-403.

ABSTRACT

Kerala represents a large segment of women migrant labourers which has significantly added to the labour force of the state over the recent years. Domestic work, agriculture, construction, hospitality are some of the prominent sectors where these women are mostly engaged in. Though the women minority play a crucial role, they frequently struggle with issues including financial exclusion, low financial literacy, exploitation susceptibility, and restricted access to safe financial services. Many of these problems may be resolved by the emergence of digital finance platforms, which offer transparent, safe, and easily available financial services. The purpose of this study is to investigate digital finance solutions and use of digital tools among women migrant community which if explored well, can improve financial inclusion, security, and empowerment of Kerala women migrant workers. Furthermore, it also enhances ease of managing finance in their daily life. With a sample size of 75 women migrants, this paper attempts to determine the degree of knowledge regarding digital finance tools and evaluate the effect on financial inclusion in person and across the web. It also investigates how block chain ensures security and transparency in financial transactions and provide recommendations for enhancing women migrant workers' access to enhanced use of digital finance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Kerala provides high wages, more employment opportunities and other welfare schemes mainly in the unorganized sector that attracts a very high population of the women migrant labours to the land. Attracted by this increased pay, good living conditions and comparatively safe environment the number seems to increase day by day. Kerala's economy depends heavily on migrant women, particularly in industries like domestic services, agriculture, and hospitality. West Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Tamil Nadu forms the major focal points of origin. The shortage of local labour within the state in unskilled occupation has necessitated the need for proving job opportunities to women from other states. Based on 2001 Census, Ernakulam records the highest inflow of migrants from other states. Surabhi and Kumar(2007), in their study 'Labour migration to Kerala' low wages in their origin, lack of opportunities and empowerment, migration of spouse and other family related issues are the key driving forces that stimulate this inward movement. Networking aspect also act as a key factor in promoting more migrants to the state. These workers, however, frequently face difficulties, such as vulnerability to economic exploitation, restricted access to formal financial services, and financial marginalization.

growth. The study hopes to assist policymakers, financial service providers, and organizations with practical suggestions to improve the financial security of female migrant workers. Digital finance platforms provide a creative answer to these problems. There are chances to expand access to financial services, enhance transaction security, and advance financial inclusion and literacy through mobile wallets, digital payments, microloans, and blockchain-based services. Many women migrant workers encounter obstacles such as inadequate digital literacy, low awareness of digital tools, and mistrust of digital financial services, despite the potential advantages.

With an emphasis on the role of blockchain technology in boosting security and transparency, this study aims to investigate how digital finance can enhance the financial security and inclusion of women migrant workers in Kerala. The integration of unbanked women groups into formal financial institutions can be accelerated through increased usage of digital financial services, improving the lives of women and their families and fostering inclusive.

Objectives:

Keeping this in mind, the main objectives of the study are

1. To understand the awareness level of digital finance tools among women migrant workers in Kerala.
2. To assess the impact of digital finance platforms on the financial inclusion of women migrant workers.
3. To study the savings and investment behaviour among the women migrants.
4. To examine the role of blockchain technology in enhancing the transparency and security of digital financial transactions for women migrant workers in Kerala

2. METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

To arrive at the objectives, primary data is collected from a total of 65 women migrant labours mainly from Thiruvallam municipality. The respondents were collected through convenient sampling method using interview method who were found engaged in

industrial sector, domestic works, salons, shops, bakeries, tailoring unit etc. Inter-state migration in Kerala has been a growing phenomenon and has increased since covid pandemic.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The following are the results based on the study **Table 1**

Digital Finance Tools	Aware (n=65)	Percentage (%)	Not Aware (n=65)	Percentage (%)
Mobile Banking	58	89.2%	7	10.8%
Digital Wallets (e.g., Paytm, Google Pay)	50	76.9%	15	23.1%
Online Savings/Investment Platforms	38	58.5%	27	41.5%
Blockchain Technology	15	23.1%	50	76.9%

Source: Primary data

It is found that almost 89% of migrant women are aware about mobile banking whereas only 23% of women has heard about blockchain technology. As far as 76% know digital payment applications like Phone pay and Google Pay and 58% and only 59% is aware about online investment and savings platform.

Table 2

Impact of Digital Finance Tool on financial inclusion	Yes (n=65)	Percentage (%)	No (n=65)	Percentage (%)
Opened a bank account	58	89.2%	7	10.8%
Increased access to savings and loans	38	58.5%	27	41.5%

Access to safer remittance services	41	23.1%	24	76.9%
More inclusive financial services	33	50.7%	32	49.2%

Source: Primary data

Eighty nine percent of the women had opened a bank account. Fifty eight percent of women agreed they have more access to savings and loans. Twenty three percent responded access to safer remittance services and a fifty percent responded they have a more inclusive financial services due to availability of digital finance tools.

Table 3

Savings and Investment Behaviour	Frequency (n=65)	Percentage (%)
Regular Savings	24	36.9%
Irregular Savings	30	46.1%
No Savings	11	16.9%
Investment Preferences	Yes	Percentage (%)
Bank deposit	36	55.3%
Post office savings	27	41.5%
Chit fund savings within community	48	73.8%
Keep savings within themselves	17	26.1%

Source: Primary data

It has been found that only thirty six percent of migrant women have regular savings habit. Forty six percent of women follow irregular savings, and sixteen percent had no savings at all.

Regarding their investment preferences, fifty five percent women had bank deposits. Majority of women had chit fund savings within their community (seventy three percent). Forty one percent women had post office savings, and twenty six percent preferred keeping cash within themselves.

Table 4

Perceived Benefits of Blockchain	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Use of blockchain service	22	33.8%
Increased transaction security	16	72.7%
Transparent transaction history	22	100%
Reduced fraud and transaction costs	18	81.8%

The study found that thirty-three percent of women migrant were aware and are using block chain services. Among the users seventy-two percent responded there has been an increased transaction security. All the users agreed they have transparent transaction history, and eighty-one percent agreed there has been a fall in fraud and transaction cost.

Major Findings

- Majority of the respondents (89%) were aware of mobile banking. Awareness about digital wallet payments like GPay, Phonepay etc are also likely to be high which is close to 76%.
- Awareness about online savings or investment platforms among the migrant women were found less and only a very few women were aware about modern technologies like blockchain technology.
- Majority of the respondents have some awareness about digital financial tools.
- The use of digital platform tools has improved the financial inclusion of women. Percentage of migrant women who has bank account was found high
- It was found that majority (89%) of the respondents have opened a bank account.
- Fifty-eight percent women responded they have an increased access to savings and loans, twenty-three percent had safer remittance services and fifty percent agreed to more inclusive financial services.
- More than half of the respondents had smartphones which has increased their access to mobile wallet usage.
- Only a small percent had regular savings habit and 16% had no savings at all.
- Majority of the women preferred chit fund savings within their community. Every month they will be contributing a fixed income to one person, and it continues on a rotation basis.
- More than half of the respondents have opened bank account.
- Forty-one percent had opened post office savings, and few women preferred to keep cash in hand rather than going for any kind of investments.
- The awareness on the use of modern technology like blockchain services was found very less among the respondents.
- A small percentage were found using block chain services. Among those respondents, positive feedback was collected on its use.
- Respondents using block chain facility agreed that block chain has enabled 100 percent transparency in the transactions. Eighty-one percent stated they have experienced reduced fraud and transaction cost and further it has also enabled transaction security.

Suggestions and Policy implications from the study

- Launch targeted financial literacy programs focusing on digital savings, investments, and modern technologies like blockchain to bridge knowledge gaps.
- Conduct workshops and training sessions in local languages to improve women's understanding of digital financial tools.
- Partner with fintech companies to introduce user-friendly digital financial platforms tailored for migrant women.
- Expand access to banking services for migrant women by simplifying account opening processes and aiding through community-based agents.
- Promote digital banking services, such as mobile wallets and online savings platforms, to increase financial security and reduce cash dependency.
- Provide government-backed savings schemes with better returns and security to encourage formal investments over informal cash savings.

- Promoted digital finance applications with simple interfaces and vernacular language support to increase usability.
- Awareness about Blockchain facility to be largely popularised among the people for improved digital divide and usage

3. CONCLUSION

The use of digital platform tools play an important role in improving the financial inclusion of women. Women are encouraged to open bank account by their entrepreneurs or owners. Only a very low percentage had insurance schemes support. The study found that with greater government involvement digital finance platforms could be made more popularised among the migrant women. Women possessing a high chance of savings potential, the ease of its use and removing the inhibitions can help the economy gain strong in financial inclusion activities. This will also help in gaining confidence and become smart in gaining digital identity without depending much on banking institutions. In this study to analyse how the use of digital finance platforms affects financial inclusion of women migrants in Kerala, a positive findings were obtained. Digital banking initiatives and financial literacy programs targeted at women can further increase the percentage of migrant women with access to a bank account. The economy showed a high banking penetration phenomenon among the migrant women community and encouraging the use of block chain technology will further accelerate this pace.

REFERENCES

- [1] Yang, and Liu. "Digital Finance and Migrant Workers' Urban Integration." *Frontiers in Public Health*, 2022.
- [2] "Can Digital Financial Inclusion Help Reduce Migrant Workers' Overwork?" *Frontiers in Public Health*, vol. 12, 2024, p. 1357481, doi:10.3389/fpubh.2024.1357481.
- [3] Zhang, C., Zhang, Y., and Wang, B. "Does Affordable Housing Alleviate Migrant Workers' Overwork in Chinese Cities?" *Cities*, vol. 142, 2023, p. 104532, doi:10.1016/j.cities.2023.104532.
- [4] BBC Media Action. *Increasing Women's Digital Literacy in India: What Works*. BBC Media Action, 2021.
- [6] Iyengar, Radhika. "A Just Transition for Women: Working Toward Digital Literacy in India.", 2023.
- [7] Google and Tata Trusts. *Empowering Rural Women Through Digital Literacy: Internet Saahi*. Google & Tata Trusts, 2015.
- [8] Variath, Bindu. *Digital Literacy Among Women in India: Bridging the Gender Divide*. *IJARIE*, vol 10 Issue 4 2024.
- [9] Ganeshanand Vethirajan. *Digital Skills to Enhance Women's Empowerment in India*, *IJCRRSSL*, Volume: 01 , Issue: 02 |, 2020 |
- [10] Meenu, Kavita Dua, and Yashpal Yadav. *Digital Literacy for Rural Women: Pathways to Empowerment and Socioeconomic Inclusion*, *Journal of scientific research and report*, Page: 37-47 Volume 31 Issue: 2025
- [11] Asiya and Manchnda, *Gender Inequalities in Digital India: A survey on digital literacy, access, and use*, January 2023, DOI:10.20919/MCUU2363