

Economic Security issues among Urban Migrants in Sri Lanka

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Literature on urban migration in Sri Lanka over the decades emphasizes that migration plays a vital role in urban population growth and which are shaped by number of social, economic and political factors. Migrant population in urban areas has been identified as vulnerable group with regard to in accessing land, housing, employment and other services. Like in many other countries, in Sri Lanka too, economic security issue is one of the key issues facing the urban migrant. Therefore, this study explores the economic characteristics of urban migrants and their status of economic security which are important for policy.

Migrant household is defined considering household in which the head of the household had migrated to an urban location six month prior to the date of survey. The study is based on both quantitative and qualitative data gathered in one urban location, Kalutara district in Sri Lanka. The socio-economic characteristics of migrants are examined by using the quantitative data collected through a sample survey which consists of 414 households. In addition, six case studies are used to identify issues faced by them during the migration process. The factors related to economic security of migrants are analyzed by using multivariate analysis.

The findings reveal that the more than half of migrants in the study area have experienced employment insecurity condition and it is correlated with their socio-demographic characteristics. Gender differences in employment security show that females had lower level of economic security compared with their male counterparts. Approximately two thirds of female migrants have engaged in informal economic activities. The multivariate logistic regression results suggest that migrant's individual and household level factors, such as occupation category, level of education, the sector in which the migrant employed, migrant's health condition, household expenditure and household servings are significant predictors of the likelihood of economic security. The qualitative findings also reveal that several environmental and political factors have contributed in creating migrant's economic security related issues. These findings suggest that policy makers should pay their attention in developing policies and programmes to overcome economic security related issues among migrants especially on females in urban communities.

Key words: *Economic Security; urban Issues; Urban Migration.