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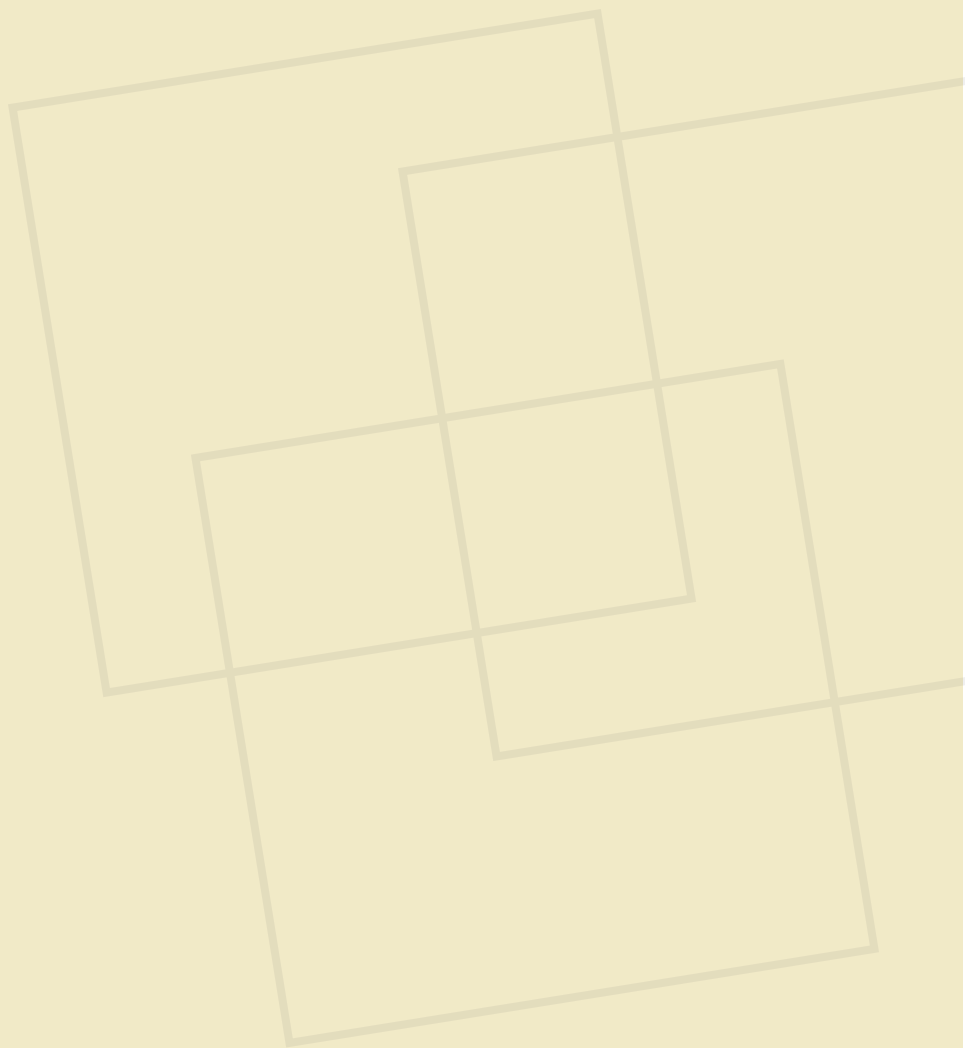


Reintegration with Home Community:

Perspectives of Returnee Migrant Workers
in Sri Lanka

Reintegration with Home Community

Perspectives of Returnee Migrant
Workers in Sri Lanka



ILO Country Office for
Sri Lanka and the Maldives

July 2013

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First published 2013

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Cataloguing in Publication Data

Also available in Sinhala and Tamil

Reintegration with Home Community: *Perspectives of returnee migrant workers in Sri Lanka*

ISBN 978-92-2-127824-5 (print)

978-92-2-127825-2 (web pdf)

International Labour Organization, Geneva, 2013

ILO Cataloguing in Publication Data

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Printed in Sri Lanka

Message from ILO Country Director for Sri Lanka and the Maldives

Annually, more than 214 million people around the world are on the move. Migrant workers send home large amounts of money; estimated at US\$240 billion to support their families and communities. Migrant remittances are a key link between labour migration and development and there is an increased recognition of the role that migrant workers play in the overall development of an economy of a country. Sri Lanka's migrant workers are no different, bringing back a wealth of benefits to the country such as financial, human and social capital. They contribute immensely to the growth and development of the country. In Sri Lanka, migrant workers are the country's highest foreign exchange earners, contributing 8 per cent of the GDP annually, more than any other sector or traditional exports and it is estimated to reach 7 billion US\$mark by the end of 2013.

I am pleased to note that Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment has now introduced a special programme for returnee migrants, recognizing them as economic heroes for their important contributions to the overall development of the country. The National Labour Migration Policy developed in 2009 advocated for the development of a reintegration sub-policy that would focus on providing support services to returnee migrant workers and help workers maximize the benefits of labour migration upon their return home. As policy formulation needs to be backed by a strong evidence base, ILO commissioned a study in December 2012 to gather qualitative and quantitative data of returnee migrant workers and contribute to policy level recommendations.

The study was commissioned through the project "Promoting Decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: *Ensuring the effective implementation of the National Labour Migration Policy* implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare and Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment and other stakeholders. The extensive research was conducted by the Social Policy Analysis and Research Centre (SPARC) of the University of Colombo, and attempts to understand the impact of labour migration on the migrant workers with a particular focus on women migrant workers but also looks at perspectives of male migrant workers as well as the impact on members of their family.

The findings of the study were shared at a national stakeholder workshop in January 2013 and comments of stakeholders were considered in the finalisation of the document. I thank the efforts of Prof. Hettige and his team at SPARC for their untiring efforts to complete this study and to all those who supported in this process, gave their valuable guidance to ensure a good document is produced. I also thank Ms. Ramani Jayasundere who worked closely with the ILO labour migration team to get the study finalized.

I hope the findings of this study will be useful for policy makers and other stakeholders in creating an enabling environment for migrant workers to successfully integrate back into their communities, maximise savings, utilize remittances for productive investment and facilitate their return and reintegration with opportunities for skill transfer and productive and decent employment.

Thank you.

Donglin Li

Country Director

ILO Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives

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1 Executive Summary

The research study on returnee migrant workers undertaken by the Social Policy Analysis and Research Centre of the University of Colombo was conducted during January-September 2012 under the Project on “Promoting decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: Ensuring the effective implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy” funded by (ILO) Swiss Development Cooperation in Sri Lanka implemented by the International Labour Organization.

The national level survey covered 15 Districts of Sri Lanka (Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Galle, Matara, Ratnapura, Kegalle, Kandy, Matale, Badulla, Ampara, Batticaloa, Anuradhapura, Kurunegala and Puttalam) and used both quantitative and qualitative research methods to collect data. It covered a sample of 2,000 returnee migrant workers representing 24 per cent males and 76 per cent females over a period of eight months.

Major findings are discussed in this report in Chapters 5-8, where important features of returnee migrant workers are presented under three phases, pre-departure, during overseas stay and post-return. 38 per cent of the migrant workers were employed before migration out of which over 50 per cent were in the unskilled labour category earning between SLR 2,500-10,000 per month and operated from close proximity to their homes. Housemaids, who are considered as low-skilled workers, account for 72 per cent of all migrant workers taken into consideration. Most women (85 per cent) who go on foreign employment are less educated and have dropped out from formal education without passing their GCE Ordinary Level. In contrast 42 per cent of the male migrant workers have passed GCE Ordinary level examinations and are generally more equipped to acquire new skills to improve their skills and their earning capacities. Only 17 per cent of the sample had obtained some sort of training prior to engaging in foreign employment which in fact places many migrant workers at the bottom of salary structures. Although the main reason to migrate is economic hardships faced by the prospective migrant workers and their families, ambitions to build a house, to educate children and the lack of job opportunities at origin too were issues that lead to migration for employment.

As for organising logistics to prepare for foreign employment, 55 per cent of the respondents have been able to acquire finances prior to migration through the prospective employers mainly through Foreign Employment Agencies. However, there are still 45 per cent who were compelled to self support their finances, but given that most of the migrant workers come from poor backgrounds, only 3 per cent of the sample had obtained loans from the formal banking systems, compelling them to pawn their valuables to obtain loans from local lenders.

It is also seen that mostly males in the 18-36 year age category and females in the 26-45 age category migrate for foreign employment. Given that over 70 per cent of the respondents were married before migration, migration can be seen as a major issue leading to family problems and a probing factor for children to become marginalised in the process with reduced care and protection under the custodianship of the spouse or close relative.

As for destination countries, the findings show that it is mostly the Middle Eastern Countries that attract Sri Lankan migrant workers. Countries such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are followed by United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Lebanon and Jordan. Migration to Malaysia has increased over the years and the country accommodates more Sri Lankan migrant workers than countries like Bahrain and Oman. While most migrant workers go overseas for a two year contract period, working overseas between two to three years is not uncommon. While 61 per cent of the migrants return due to the completion of the contract period, 24 per cent of workers had returned due to various difficulties experienced by them in the host country.

72 per cent of the migrant workers were deprived of leaving their place of work and passports of 74 per cent of the migrant workers were withheld held by the employer. The most common means of harassment were

forcing them to perform activities other than the agreed ones, depriving them of salary, violence or threats of violence, transferring from the original employer to other employers, forcing to work under health risks and forced employment longer than the agreed duration. Only 40 per cent obtained any form of employee benefits in the form of medical leave, gifts, paid leave and payment of a pension. Employee Provident Funds were seen among less than 3 per cent of the sample. Only 40 per cent of the migrant workers migrated for a second term and 20 per cent migrated for a third term.

During overseas employment most migrant workers earn under SLR 25,000, however it should be noted that 20 per cent of the migrant workers have earned less than SLR. 10,000 per month. It is clearly seen that males have a better earning capacity than females. Most migrant workers sent over 75 per cent of their remittances on a regular basis and males tend to send remittances relatively more regularly during subsequent migrations.

Once a migrant worker leaves the country, most of the stakeholders such as the Foreign Employment Agency, sub-agents and the Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau (SLBFE) do not sufficiently monitor or look into matters concerning migrant workers. The agency counterparts in the receiving countries are seen as the main culprits for allowing abuse and harassment to take place despite their knowledge of it. However, if the consular services of Sri Lanka established in the receiving countries play a more proactive and interactive role, such inhumane and unfavourable conditions faced by some of the migrant workers could be drastically reduced.

Even though all migrant workers have gone overseas to earn, 15 per cent of the respondents believe that their economic situation has deteriorated since their migration. However, general improvements are seen in terms of improvement of children's education, health, nutrition, psychological status and families in general.

Concentrating on the post-return phase, there are significant trends that are analysed, which in turn would be important to determine programme interventions for returnee migrant workers. Many returnees have mentioned that their families, children, the extended families and the society are happy about their family-level and national-level contribution. But there is also a significant proportion of children, families and societies that have little or no concern about their contribution. Returnees have expressed that they have effectively reintegrated socially, but only 10 per cent of them are represented in community organisations.

13 per cent of the returnees have moved into new houses after returning. This is mostly seen in Puttlam, Batticaloa, Anuradhapura, Kegalle and Colombo Districts out of which half of the communities that came into the sample predominantly represent Moors. In all the locations, improvements in the housing condition were seen. However, most of the investments have been on consumable assets such as electrical and electronic items and less on acquisition of productive assets.

When it comes to economic reintegration, 79 per cent of the returnee migrant workers have been indecisive on what they would do upon returning. 54 per cent females and 24 per cent males had decided not to work upon return. 70 per cent of the returnees who are presently employed have found jobs within 6 months after returning whereas another 20 per cent have spent between 7-12 months to find a job in Sri Lanka. 60 per cent of the ones employed are satisfied with their new jobs whereas 17 per cent are dissatisfied about their job in Sri Lanka. However, their salary scales and the nature of jobs performed do not indicate major changes, indicating either that they have not acquired skills or the skills that they have acquired are not marketable. Most of the housemaids have mentioned that their Arabic language knowledge has improved and that their cooking skills and kitchen maintenance skills have improved. However none of these skills is economically marketable at the moment. However, the potential could be enhanced with assessment and certification of skills. Attention needs to be paid to regulating & revamping the domestic service in the country as well.

Although the numbers suggest that reintegration of migrant workers socially and economically seems to be

2 Introduction

The research study on returnee migrant workers undertaken by the Social Policy Analysis and Research Since independence, many Sri Lankans have migrated to foreign countries for various reasons. Some of them had done so looking for better economic opportunities. A majority of them settled down in the countries of their destination. Since the late 1970s the number of migrant workers, making the Middle East their popular destination started to increase rapidly. The numbers involved then however have not been large in comparison to the present situation where over 260,000 persons migrate each year for employment abroad as shown in Table 1. Unlike earlier generations of migrants, most migrants today engage in contract employment abroad and eventually return to the country. The migrants employed abroad today hail from diverse social backgrounds. Many come from poorer economic and social strata. As opposed to many migrating on a professional basis, most labour migrant workers send home more than half their earnings abroad on a regular basis to support their families left behind.

The increase in the price of oil coupled with an increase in demand for petroleum products from the developed industrial countries and elsewhere has made the Middle-East a rapidly growing economic region leading to higher incomes for local inhabitants and numerous industries and infrastructure development. This has led to a steadily increasing demand for skilled and unskilled workers. Grossly inadequate local labour supply has created the demand for foreign labour. This gap has been filled by workers from many countries including Sri Lanka.

On the other hand, the introduction of an open economic policy in Sri Lanka in 1977 created a socio-economic environment conducive for foreign employment. In view of the growing importance of inward remittances for the country and the positive impact of labour migration on unemployment at home, successive governments have taken measures to facilitate labour migration (CENWOR, 1997). It is also significant that more and more female workers have joined the exodus, particularly for domestic work (See Table 1). However, in more recent years, male workers have begun to outnumber female workers, though well over 100,000 female workers still migrate abroad annually.

Table1. Foreign employment by gender (1975 - 2011*)

Year	Male	Female	Total
1975	-	-	1,039
1980	-	-	42,745
1986	11,023	5,433	16,456
1990	15,377	27,248	42,625
1995	46,021	126,468	172,489
2000	59,793	122,395	182,188
2001	59,807	124,200	184,007
2002	70,522	133,251	203,773
2003	74,508	135,338	209,846
2004	80,699	134,010	214,709
2005	93,896	137,394	231,290
2006	90,170	111,778	201,948
2007	103,476	114,983	218,459
2008	128,232	122,267	250,499
2009	119,381	127,745	247,126
2010	136,850	130,657	267,507
2011*	135,870	127,090	262,960

*Provisional

Source: Annual Report 2011, SLBFE

Another aspect of the Sri Lankan migration pattern is that a majority of migrant workers continue to be from rural areas. In fact, overseas labour migration is a major socio-economic phenomenon in all parts of the country (See Table 2).

Table 2. Foreign Migration by Home Town 2006 - 2011* (see Map 1)

District	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011*
Colombo	26,005	27,953	30,073	30,555	31,595	30,993
Gampaha	17,936	19,560	21,310	23,589	25,495	24,003
Kalutara	10,100	10,468	11,345	13,209	13,397	12,590
Kandy	14,466	16,227	18,943	20,734	25,201	21,435
Matale	5,141	5,814	6,359	6,623	6,787	6,126
Nuwara Eliya	3,529	4,176	4,461	4,512	4,022	4,592
Galle	10,083	10,192	10,538	12,045	12,882	12,438
Matara	4,603	5,276	5,420	5,624	6,034	5,544
Hambantota	3,242	3,690	3,946	3,816	4,803	4,284
Jaffna	2,649	3,985	4,162	3,009	4,286	4,008
Mannar	658	924	640	472	637	623
Kilinochchi	-	-	3	3	-	224
Vauniya	1,250	1,987	1,424	1,300	1,487	1,362
Mullaitivu	102	170	174	159	139	172
Batticaloa	8,626	10,224	11,021	11,764	14,708	16,163
Ampara	8,412	9,952	9,632	11,402	13,100	14,966
Trincomalee	4,390	4,645	5,012	5,789	7,043	7,871
Kurunegala	27,504	21,482	22,614	23,556	21,858	24,452
Puttalam	9,807	11,053	11,883	13,196	14,402	13,268
Anuradhapura	11,711	11,651	11,160	11,088	12,489	11,850
Polonnaruwa	4,763	4,962	4,725	5,083	5,970	5,672
Badulla	5,749	6,555	7,082	6,806	6,816	6,291
Monaragala	1,555	1,692	1,941	2,068	2,136	1,768
Ratnapura	5,765	6,024	6,586	7,611	7,635	7,480
Kegalle	9,860	9,802	9,883	11,340	11,153	10,284
Not indicated	4,042	9,995	30,162	11,773	13,432	14,501
Total	201,948	218,459	250,499	247,126	267,507	262,960

Source: Information Technology Division-SLBFE

There are popular destinations for foreign employment among the Sri Lankans. As elaborated in Figure 1 Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are the most common destinations of migrant workers. Countries like UAE, Qatar and Lebanon are also desired destination countries. Bahrain and Oman too are destinations to which migrant workers go to. South East Asian countries such as Malaysia, South Korea, and Singapore are emerging as popular destinations for foreign employment for migrant workers.

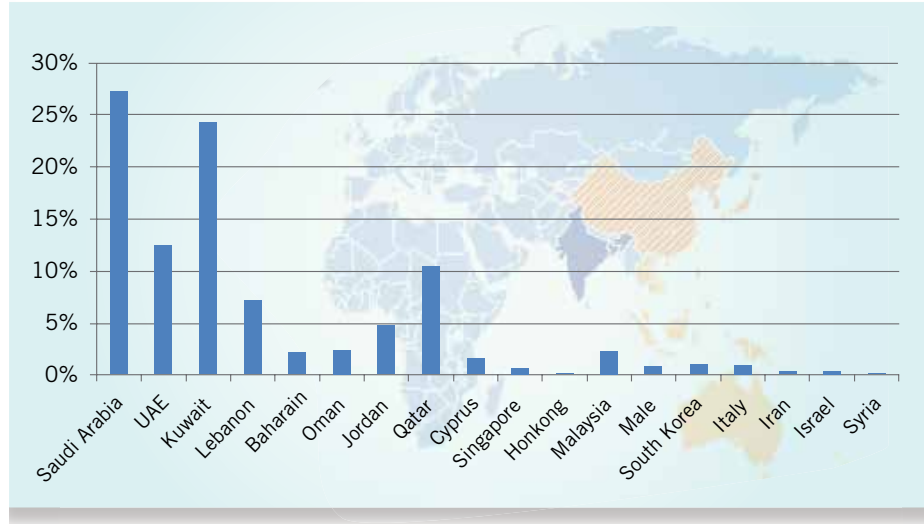


Figure 1: Destination countries of Sri Lankan returnee migrant workers (Source: Survey data)

An overwhelming majority of the migrant workers, as shown in Figure 2 especially women, migrate to work as housemaids whereas many males migrate as drivers, cleaners and labourers. Technical and professional employment that require specialized skills such as electricians, automobile mechanics and tile layers are mostly occupied by males.

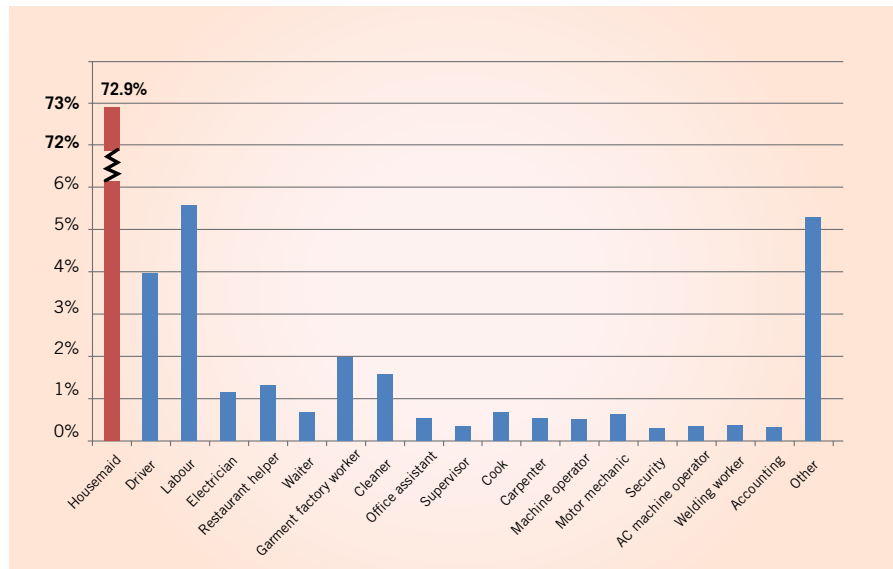


Figure 2: Popular occupations of Sri Lankan returnee migrant workers (Source: Survey data)

The mass exodus of workers abroad, particularly those from vulnerable backgrounds has brought in its wake a range of social and psychological problems affecting their families, in particular children. An equally important issue has been the eventual social and economic reintegration after an extended period of employment abroad. While some workers return after a single spell of employment, others return home almost close to retirement age. The problems and prospects of settling back and reintegrating vary widely for different groups of returnees depending on their own characteristics as well as the socio-economic circumstances of their families and communities. Thus reintegration is a complex issue that deserves careful study, particularly from the perspective of the returnee migrants themselves. Given the sheer numbers and their geographical spread across the country, effective reintegration of returnee migrants remains a nationally important social and economic policy issue that needs to be addressed without further delay. While the economic dimension of reintegration is critically important, social and psychological aspects are equally important for the overall wellbeing of a family.

As mentioned above, returnee migrants are a diverse group of people in terms of gender, age, marital status, skills, level of savings, social status, psychological well being, social and family networks, aspirations, expectations, etc. These diverse circumstances play an important part in shaping the life chances of returnee migrants once they are back in Sri Lanka. Therefore, any attempt to reintegrate them in order to benefit both them and society, must take into account such diversity. From a national development point of view, re-deployment of their labour, both skilled and unskilled, is an important issue that a reintegration policy needs to address. Ensuring adequate social security after retirement is an equally important matter to be explored as part of the present endeavour. Research has shown that the proportion unemployed after return of all workers is as high as 16.2 percent compared to their pre-migration level of 8.4 percent (Athukorala, 1990). This difference tends to narrow with the passage of time and the level of skill. Workers in the skilled category find local employment more rapidly upon their return, than those in the unskilled category.

Thus it is apparent that many returnees do not find employment or income sources after their return, making them vulnerable to poverty. While the deployment of skilled workers in appropriate areas of work can benefit the economy at large, skill provision to unskilled workers can no doubt enhance their employability. As is evident, housemaids who return from abroad have a tendency to remain unemployed as they cannot easily find suitable employment. The establishment of the Return Migration Branch (RMB) as far back as 1981 at the research development division of the Ministry of Labour marked the beginning of Sri Lanka's policy interest in return migration (Athukorala, 1990), though not much was done until recently to build on that initial interest.

More recent developments relating to public policy on labour migration are significant in the above regard. For example, one of the objectives of the newly adopted National Labour Migration Policy is to facilitate reintegration of migrant workers. This policy was adopted in 2009 under the mandate of the newly established Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare under which the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) The National Action Plan the Ministry developed the following year with the support of the IOM spells out it's above objectives in greater detail.

As mentioned, the Sri Lanka National Policy on Labour Migration identifies reintegration of returnee workers as one of its key objectives, however, a national policy dedicated to reintegration of returnee migrant workers is yet to be spelled out and adopted. It is in view of this persisting gap that the present study has been undertaken in order to provide evidence that would contribute to the development of such a policy.

2.1. Objectives of the Study

1. Generate comprehensive data on return migrants which is essential to understand their needs and aspirations.
2. Understand the impact of migration on migrants as well as the impact on their families.
3. Support the State to develop and implement a comprehensive return and reintegration plan for migrant workers.
4. Provide guidelines for support services for return migrant workers, in order to develop a reintegration policy.

2.2. Outputs of the Study:

As stated before the purpose of the study is “**to gather and analyze data on aspects of labour migration that have a bearing on issues of reintegration of returnee migrants into their communities, local economies and the wider economy of the country**”. Addressing of such issues can improve the life chances of the returnees, their families and their future well being in terms of social security by making use of the financial resources and skills available to them at local levels and within the country as a whole. More specifically, the following outputs are expected from the study.

- a. A comprehensive quantitative database comprising detailed statistical tables at both aggregate and disaggregate levels. These would relate to all areas covered by the survey instrument (Frequency tables).
- b. A set of tables that show how key variables are inter-connected in statistical terms (cross tabulations). i.e. how reintegration variables are dependent on migration and socio-economic variables.
- c. A comprehensive text/report that interprets quantitative data in the light of the objectives of the study
- d. A comprehensive analysis of qualitative data in the light of the objectives of the study
- e. A set of GIS maps that show the distribution of returnee migrants by district, province and sector and socio-economic variables
- f. A set of recommendations and guidelines for the development of policy

2.3. Conceptual Framework:

The emergence of labour migration as a major socio-economic phenomenon since the late 1970s encouraged researchers to undertake studies dealing with diverse aspects of migration. These studies have explored not only diverse aspects of migration but diverse trends in labour migration as well as their implications. One major area of focus has been the social response to migration, in particular female labour migration. While some studies have examined social costs and benefits of labour migration others have looked at social and cultural change brought about by mass migration of labour. Most of the studies undertaken by researchers have concentrated on out migration and its implications. On the other hand given the fact that labour migration has been a cyclical process the neglect of various aspects of return flow has been a major lacuna in research literature. In most countries where labour migration is a significant phenomenon, return migration has also been considered as an equally important phenomenon. In the case of Sri Lanka, the number of migrants returning to Sri Lanka has been as significant as those who have migrated for overseas employment. The lack of a focus on returned migrants has been a major issue that has escaped the attention of both policy makers as well as others concerned about labour migration. This might be partly due to the fact that a worker employed abroad is considered as an asset and has access to welfare and other benefits through the State whereas a returnee may not necessarily be perceived as a resource and

the support services offered to them are minimal or none at all. It is often this situation that encourages returnee migrant workers to look for foreign employment once again.

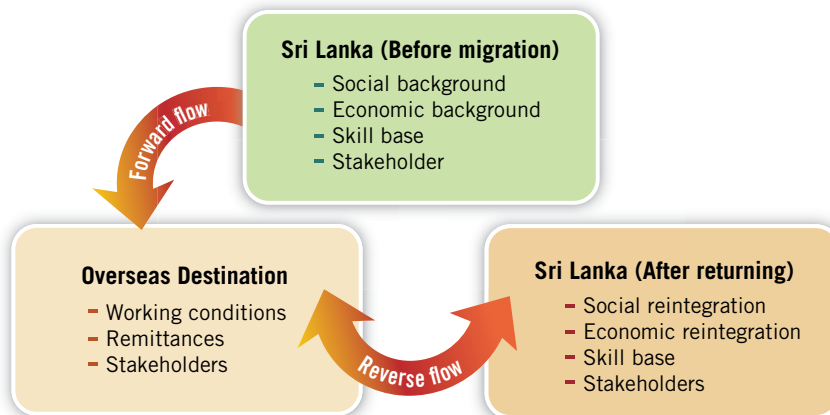


Figure 3. Labour migration as a cyclical process

Looking at migration from a holistic perspective, it seems reasonable to consider the reverse flow or returned migration as important as the forward movement of labour. This is true not only from a human rights perspective but also from a moral and economic point of view. Returnee migrants deserve the same attention and service support as the migrants who are still in employment overseas. However there is no mechanism at present to follow-up and monitor the progress and wellbeing of returnee migrant workers in the country. The recent state initiative, namely the The “Rataviruwo” programme appears to be an attempt to address this issue. Rataviruwo programme’s objective is “to improve the socio-economic conditions of the migrant workers and their family members by forming a nation wide network of the returnee migrant workers called the “Rataviruwo” Organization.

Field data shows that returnee migrant workers do not always follow an identical trajectory when they return to Sri Lanka. While some revert back to their old roles and functions others move into new areas of activities either as employed or self-employed. These individuals often have had no support or guidance in their endeavors. Many returnee migrant workers remain unemployed for want of better employment than what they were engaged in before they left on overseas employment. Underemployment among returnee migrant workers is therefore not uncommon. This is where a returnee is employed but not in a job that is suited to his or her competency level. Many settle for whichever employment opportunity that is available, often compromising with a lower salary not corresponding to their skills and experience overseas. It is therefore necessary to compare the profile of migrant workers before migration and after their return to Sri Lanka. This is presented geographically in Table 4.

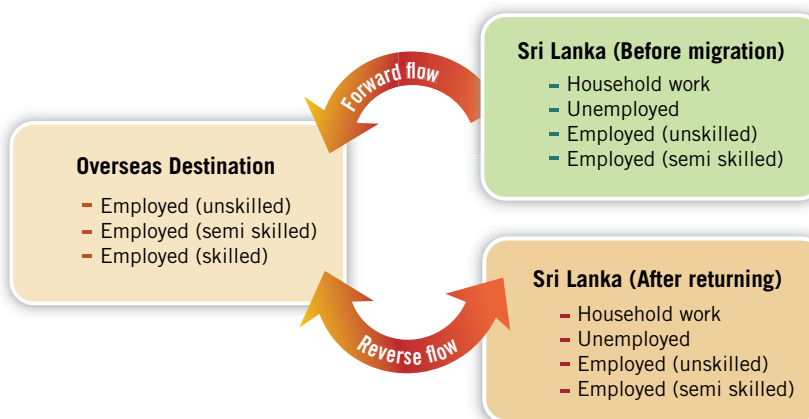


Figure 4: Labour migration's cyclical reverse flow

3 Methodology

As regards the sample, 2000 returnee migrants were selected using a purposive sampling design so that the survey would capture at least 75 per cent female migrant workers representing mainly the disadvantaged and vulnerable. The sample was drawn from 15 Districts with higher percentages of migrant workers, based on SLBFE statistics of 2007. From each district, two DS divisions with the highest reported number of migrant workers were selected to draw the sample of migrant workers for face to face interviews. (See Table 3 for more information).

The main instrument of data collection for the study was a pre-coded structured interview schedule. It was possible to collect quantifiable data required for a detailed analysis of the demographic and socio-economic profile of the sample population and other aspects of migration. The structure of the interview schedule included the following:

- a. Demographic and socio-economic profile of returnee migrants
- b. Education, skill profile, family structure and employment prior to migration
- c. Skill acquisition and employment history
- d. New skills and experiences acquired
- e. Age of return and reasons
- f. Savings and assets acquired
- g. Present activity status and income
- h. Extent of re-integration at present: family, social networks, work, income
- i. Aspirations, expectations and problems of re-integration
- j. Perceived requirements for re-integration
- k. Suggestions and recommendations for policy and program development

The interview schedule was developed by an inter-disciplinary team consisting of a sociologist, a statistician and a geographer. It was pilot tested in the field and the interview schedule was revised accordingly with ILO inputs before translating into the local languages, Sinhala and Tamil. Most of the areas covered by the survey instrument were further probed by conducting fifteen in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, in order to look at more specific conditions and issues prevailing in specific communities such as remote villages, resource poor areas and the plantations. Audio visual material was also gathered in order to help illustrate specific and complex issues.

SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) has been used for quantitative data entry and analysis. Quantitative analysis was performed at macro as well as disaggregated levels such as district, sex, and urban, rural variable/s. In addition, the collected qualitative data from in depth interviews with some selected respondents have been analyzed manually in order to supplement some of the general findings from the quantitative survey. This analysis provided a comprehensive picture of the situation of permanently returned migrant workers.

Table 3. Sampling Frame

	District	District Total Departures (2007)	Sample	Selected D.S.Division 01	Selected D.S.Division 02
1	Colombo	27953	300	Thimbirigasyaya	Nugegoda
2	Kurunegala	21482	230	Kurunegala	Kuliyapitiya West
3	Gampaha	19560	200	Gampaha	Ja-ela
4	Kandy	16227	180	Kandy Four Gravets	Ganga Ihala Korale
5	Anuradhapura	11651	130	Nuwaragampalatha East	Madawachchiya
6	Puttalam	11053	120	Kalpitiya	Wennappuwa
7	Kalutara	10468	118	Kalutara	Panadura
8	Batticaloa	10224	115	Kattankudy	Koralepattu
9	Galle	10192	115	Nagoda	Ambalangoda
10	Ampara	9952	112	Lahugala	Mahaoya
11	Kegalle	9802	110	Kegalle	Mawanella
12	Badulla	6555	75	Badulla	Welimada
13	Ratnapura	6024	70	Elapatha	Godakawela
14	Matale	5814	65	Matale	Ukuwela
15	Matara	5276	60	Matara Four Gravets	Welipitiya
	Total	182233	2000		

Source: SLBFE -2007 Annual Statistical Hand Book

3.1. Limitations of the Study

The sample includes only returnee migrant workers which is the core of the study, but excludes the perspective of people who have migrated and continue to stay overseas for prolonged periods under one or a few employers. Such families and children of such families need to be studied further.

The sample of returnee migrant workers was selected by using a purposive sampling design as there was no valid data sets with information about all the returnee migrant workers at the time of the research. As a result, it was difficult to generalize the sample findings to the entire population of returnee migrant workers.

Providing false information and concealing of bad experiences of migrant workers due to various reasons during data collection could possibly lead to under-reporting of actual numbers and the magnitude of issues. It should also be noted that the enumerators had limited time (approximately one hour) to complete each questionnaire.

In order to supplement quantitative data, qualitative data was also gathered by conducting a series of focus group discussions and in depth interviews along with observations and informal discussions with relevant members of the communities.

4 Present Profile of Returnee Migrant Workers

The most important aspect of this study is to see how migrant workers re-adapt to the local conditions at the family level, community level and how they could contribute to national development and their economic wellbeing at the local, family and personal levels. In order to broadly understand the above, present demographic, economic, skill and social aspects of returnee migrant workers and how those aspects have changed in comparison to the pre-migration situation needs to be discussed.

In this section, we look at some important aspects of the profile of returnee migrant workers in order to understand the various intricacies, identify opportunities and challenges of reintegration. While quantitative data helps us understand the magnitude of the task ahead, qualitative data sheds considerable light on the more complex issues of a social and cultural nature.

4.1. Demographic and Social Profile of Migrant Workers

The description of the demographics of migrant workers is as important in determining the trends in the foreign employment sector as much as the analysis of economic and social settings before and after migration. The backgrounds from which the migrants come from, their age groups, sex and gender based differences and their marital status will be discussed to widen the understanding on the background of migrant workers.

As seen in general, families are headed by males. Extended families are seen mainly in the rural areas and the grandparents are accommodated in the same premises or the children are allowed to live with their grandparents.

As mentioned earlier, there is a sex based difference between the social roles played by male and female migrant workers prior to and after they return. While the males concentrate more on economic activities, protection and education aspects of children are generally attended to mainly by females. Communities where a high concentration of migrant workers are found are generally under-served and fewer services seem to have penetrated there.

Going into more detail, it is seen that the females have felt that they are more responsible to take care of the children, feed them and educate them and also to protect them as the males are busy dealing with economic issues at the household level.

As is clear from Figure 5 that most of the migrant workers (72 per cent) fall within the age category of 26-45 years. 24 per cent of female and 14 per cent of male returnees are over 45 years of age, but many are still within the productive, reproductive and economically active age.

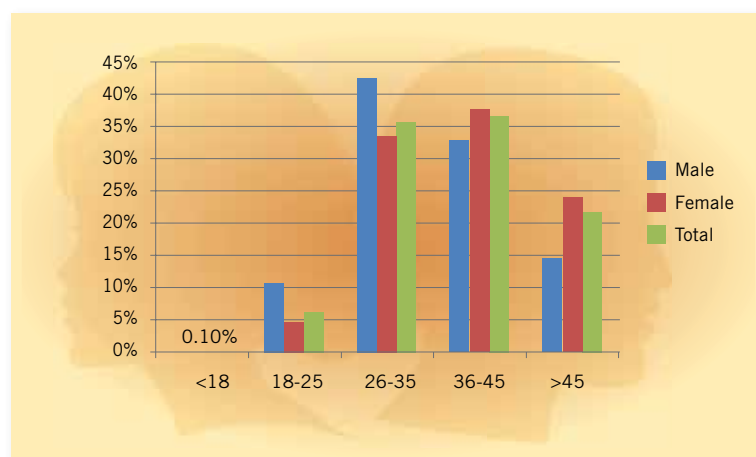


Figure 5: Current age structure of returnee migrant workers (See map 2) (Source: Survey data)

As shown in Figure 6 the age at which people migrate for foreign employment is mostly between 18-45, but it shows significant differences for men and women. More males (28 per cent) migrate than females (19 per cent) within the 18-25 age. 65 per cent of males tend to migrate before the age of 35 whereas over 41 per cent of the women migrate after 36 years. However, there are 59 per cent of women who migrate before 35 years and is a significant proportion as they are in the reproductive, child bearing and child caring age.

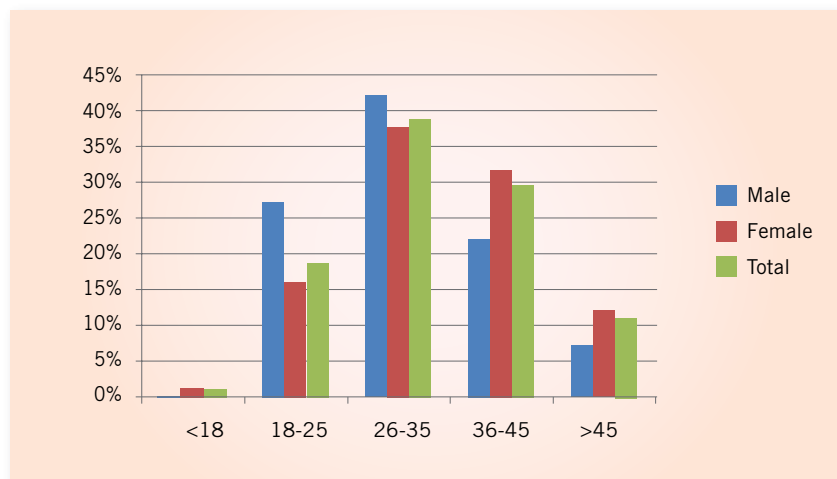


Figure 6: Age level - Before migration (Source: Survey data)

Another interesting finding is where it indicates that there have been both girls and boys under 18 years of age too who have migrated for employment. This could be the tip of the iceberg in terms of situations of trafficking and could well be an under representation of the actual figure as most of those who migrated before they turned 18 are unlikely to openly say it.

Marital status of the migrant workers is another key factor of consideration when it comes to caring for the children and family relationship difficulties induced through foreign employment.

Figure 7 indicates that 11 per cent of total (19 per cent of male and 9 per cent of female) returnees are presently unmarried whereas 76 per cent (79 per cent of male and 75 per cent of female) returnees respectively are presently married. Single parenting due to divorce, separation and being widowed is also high among female returnees (16 per cent collectively) than among male returnees (2.5 per cent). Out of the female returnees, 6.3 per cent, 1.8 per cent, 8 per cent are separated, divorced and widowed respectively. Together the latter categories constitute a significant proportion.

As expected, the 'never married' column shrinks and the 'married' column has grown over the period. Similarly, the combined 'separated' and 'divorced' columns are 6.5 per cent currently versus 5.1 per cent before migration. Therefore, there has been a slight increase (1.4 per cent) of the combined separated and divorced components. Given that it is a small proportion that is taken into consideration, even an increase of 1.4 per cent still is significant. This points towards an increased straining of marital relationships when one spouse is away or there are limited channels of communication with the family. It again reiterates the need to pay more attention towards supporting greater communication with the family. It is essential to pay greater attention to these categories of returnee migrants in any reintegration intervention as issues pertaining to reintegration are likely to be more complex.

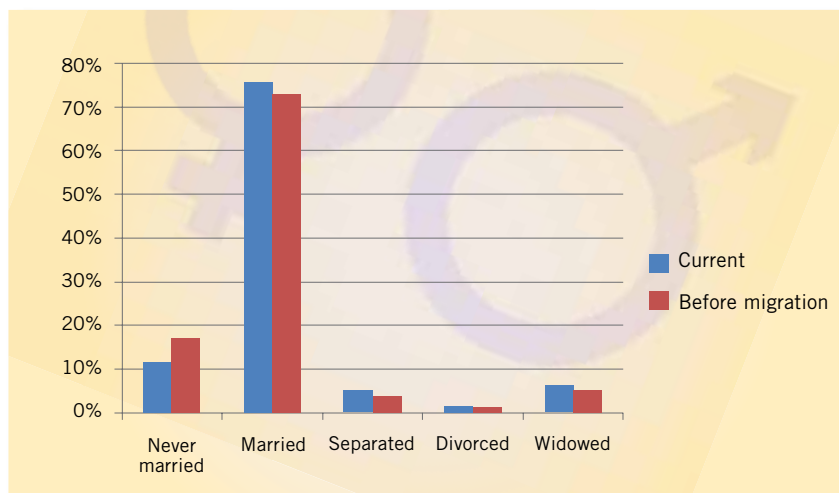


Figure 7: Marital status before migration and after return (Source: Survey data)

Over 70 per cent of both males and females migrate after they were married. 10 per cent of the migrant workers are separated, divorced or widowed and a majority of the 10 per cent could well be single parents. Therefore children of such parents are placed in a vulnerable situation as they are left without any responsible caregiver. Further, a marriage for a second or third time too seems to have placed children in a somewhat vulnerable position.

Udeshi, a 34 year old mother of two from Galle: "I would never have considered to go for foreign employment leaving my two children at home unattended if a garment factory or something was available in the area"

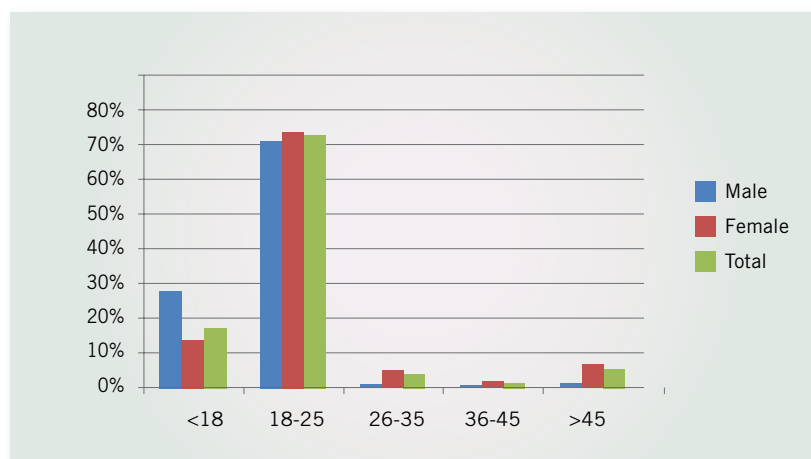


Figure 8: Marital status-Before Migration (Source: Survey data)

The Social profile analysis in the pre-departure and post-return contexts mainly provides insight as to what the nature and extent of social links are and how such links can be utilised to ensure that the returnee migrants reintegrate more effectively.

It is seen that it is mostly females who feel responsible for ensuring protection, education and care for the children whereas the males largely lead a relatively care free life. It was observed across all the communities that alcohol consumption by the males is one of the key determinants of economic and social instability of respective families.

Kamala, a 48 year old female from Kalutara: “My husband is an alcoholic and the sub-agent in the area got to know about the financial situation of our family through him and later on visited us to encourage me to engage in foreign employment, which I subsequently did.”

However, family bonds seem to have some value as the decision to migrate for foreign employment is generally taken in consultation with the spouse. It is seen that 73 per cent of the migrant workers discuss with their spouse prior to leaving for foreign employment whereas discussing with children is done only by 10 per cent of the migrant workers and only 20 per cent of the prospective migrant workers consult their parents before migration. As children are most likely to become beneficiaries or victims of parent migration, the lack of consultation with children during the decision making process prior to migration is noteworthy. Such a lack of communication can create a sense of neglect and abandonment in the minds of children leading to frustration and even anti social behaviour.

As indicated in Table 4, a majority of the migrant workers have mentioned that they have not seen the deterioration of most aspects of children. However, family economic situation and family business situations have deteriorated slightly (15 per cent and 8 per cent respectively) according to the perspective of the returnee migrant workers. However, it should be noted that the measures are largely subjective and indicate broad trends. What should also be noted is that, in more than 50 per cent of the cases the educational status of children has not improved. This is significant given the fact that education is a major push factor

Table 4: Changes observed in social, economic and psychological conditions

Indicator	Improved	No change	Deteriorated
Health condition of children	41.68%	55.88%	2.43%
Psychological status of children	57.92%	39.38%	2.70%
Nutrition of children	44.05%	53.58%	2.37%
Education of children	45.14%	51.39%	3.47%
Psychological status of the spouse	53.90%	42.50%	3.60%
Psychological status of extended family	46.12%	51.56%	2.32%
Family economic situation	22.48%	62.19%	15.33%
Family businesses	37.06%	55.33%	7.61%

(Source: Survey data)

The Nature and alteration of the association with the neighbourhood is one of the key determinants of reintegration with the community. It is seen that 17 per cent (10.4 per cent of male and 8.7 per cent of female) of the returnee migrant workers have changed their residence upon return, causing the severing of social ties, bonds etc with familiar communities and entering into new neighbourhoods

Figure 9 shows the district-wise differences of the pattern of change of residences among migrant workers. Puttalam (26 per cent), Batticaloa (24 per cent), Anuradhapura (20 per cent) and Kegalle (17 per cent) are areas that are represented by most of the Tamil speaking predominantly Muslim communities from the Divisional Secretariat Divisions of Kalpitiya, Kattankudy, Valachchenai and Mawanella. The same Districts represent a higher percent change of residences among migrant workers. The District of Colombo represented by mostly urban underserved settlements in the Kirupalone and Rajagiriya DS Divisions too seem to have 16 per cent of the returnee migrant workers moving into new residences.

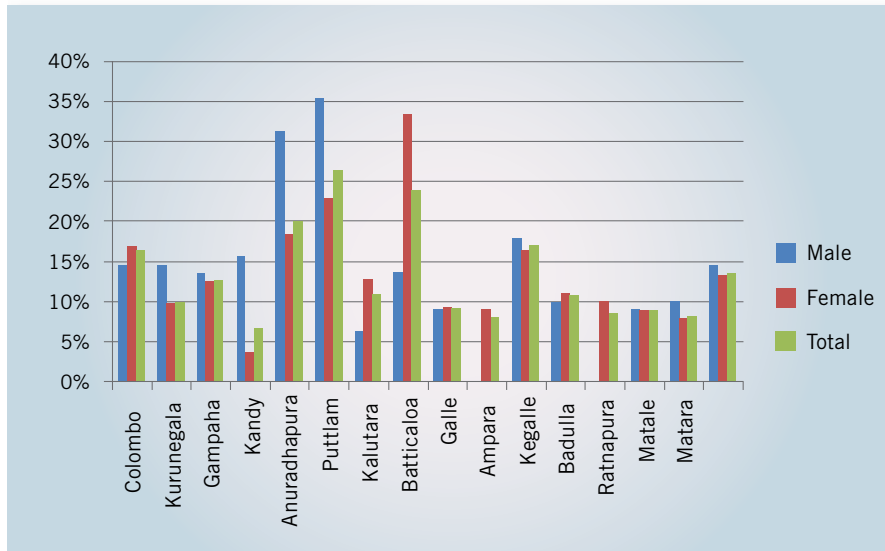


Figure 9: Percent of returnee migrant workers who moved to new houses since returning (Source: Survey data)

The most common reason to move has been due to the construction of a new house. 51 per cent each of males and females of those that moved to new residences are those that have constructed new houses. 18 per cent of males and 27 per cent of females of those who have changed the residences have married and moved to new residences or residences of spouses. Family problems, insufficient space in the previous house, conflict, children's education, detaching from extended family were other reasons for moving to new residences. A reasonable proportion (12 per cent) of the returnees who have moved to new houses did not give a particular reason for them to move into new houses.

During qualitative data collection it was revealed that there are some migrant workers who migrate due to various issues with their neighbourhood. Some of the most common reasons that were not raised during quantitative data collection were:

1. Moving out of the previous house to induce discontinuation of extra marital relationship of spouse left in Sri Lanka with a neighbour.
2. To avoid name calling (mainly for females) by neighbours referring to those who went to Dubai as prostitutes.
3. To avoid children associating with unwanted persons in the neighbourhood.

Above causes were mentioned at the FGDs, but still cannot be by any means generalized to the whole migrant worker population, as only 13 per cent of the migrant workers moved to new houses. Besides, about 9 per cent moved due to building new houses and marriage, which means that it is only applicable to approximately 4 per cent of the migrant worker population.

The female migrant workers who comprise 76 per cent of the total migrant worker sample are expected by their families and mainly by their children to play a caregiver and protector's role within the family structure, often in addition to an economic one. Children of female migrant workers have been placed in vulnerable situations during migration due to the guardian being mostly the grandmother who is too feeble to play the part of a caregiver and attend to the children's needs. On the other hand, other relatives to which the custodianship is given have other responsibilities to attend to, resulting in the hence de-prioritizing the children of the migrant worker. The family institution has tended to become more fragile during migration. Such effects could be products of alternate primary caregiver of the children not taking responsibility,

children's feeling of abandonment by the migrant worker, migrant having limited communication with the family, while in service and spouse's addiction to alcohol etc.. Therefore there is multiplicity of areas to be explored and discussed in order to devise optimal methods of sustainable reintegration.

4.2. Economic Profile of Migrant Workers

Economic, both macro and micro analysis is required to understand the role played by migrant workers at the national level and also the economic role of the individual migrant worker at the family or community level prior to migration and after returning.

The role played by the migrant worker prior to migration is felt mostly at the family or community level. There is a clear gender based difference between the economic roles played by the migrant workers. Out of the total returnees, 53 per cent want to engage in economic activity upon return. 54 per cent of the females have preferred not to work at all upon return whereas 76 per cent of males have wanted to engage in economic activity.

767 out of the sample of 2,000 which is 38 per cent of the sample are at present economically active. Out of the ones employed, 65 per cent of males and 54 per cent of females believe that it was easy to find employment upon their return. This is in fact a fairly good number and 72 per cent of the returnees who wanted to be employed upon return have been able to find employment, although there are concerns about the quality of employment and the salaries they receive. Out of the ones employed, 65 per cent of the males and 54 per cent of the females believed it was easy to find employment upon return. This is understandable given the fact that unemployment in the country is relatively low and many people leave the country for employment creating job opportunities for people who are left behind.

In comparison 45 per cent of the migrant workers were employed or engaged in some economic activity before migration. Most male migrant workers (80 per cent) were been employed before migration. In contrast only 24 per cent of the female migrant workers were been previously employed. Nevertheless the females seem to have played a significant role at the family level such as taking care of children and other dependents prior to migration.

In most cases where females have been employed, they have engaged in economic activities as the secondary means of income generation for the family.

Kumari (38) from Ratnapura: "I used to roll beedi (local cigarette) as the earnings of my husband was not sufficient to cover all costs including food for us, for children, pay off loans and for him to drink"

"Kamala, a 48 year old female from Kalutara: "My husband is a retired government servant. As the income he got through his employment was insufficient, I was motivated to go for foreign employment."

As the above example suggests, it is the informal sector that many rely on for employment to make ends meet.

Unemployment among returnee migrant workers is 26 per cent and another 1 per cent are looking forward to reengage in foreign employment soon. 17.5 per cent of the males have remained unemployed after return, but still 71 per cent of the males being currently employed is noteworthy. Among females, it is only 23 per cent that are employed and the unemployment rate is 27 per cent. Most of the female migrant workers (45 per cent) engage in household activities and do not wish to reengage in economic activity outside of their homes. 3 per cent of the males too engage in household work currently and are not looking for employment. Home businesses have been set up by 4 per cent of the males and 1.5 per cent of the females. If livelihood development interventions succeed, the number of home businesses could increase, preventing migrants from resorting to repeat migration.

The above statistics further reflected in Figure 10, shows that more jobs are available for males, in diverse sectors in the unskilled and semi- skilled categories. Although there is a significant proportion (45 per cent) of the female returnees who opt not to be employed, they in fact find employment in the unskilled sector and reengage in employment within Sri Lanka. Most of the migrant workers who are employed reengage in elementary occupations in which they used to be engaged in prior to migration. Elementary occupations include informal forms of income and employment such as providing manual labour in the service and agriculture sectors depending on the urban or rural setting in which they live.

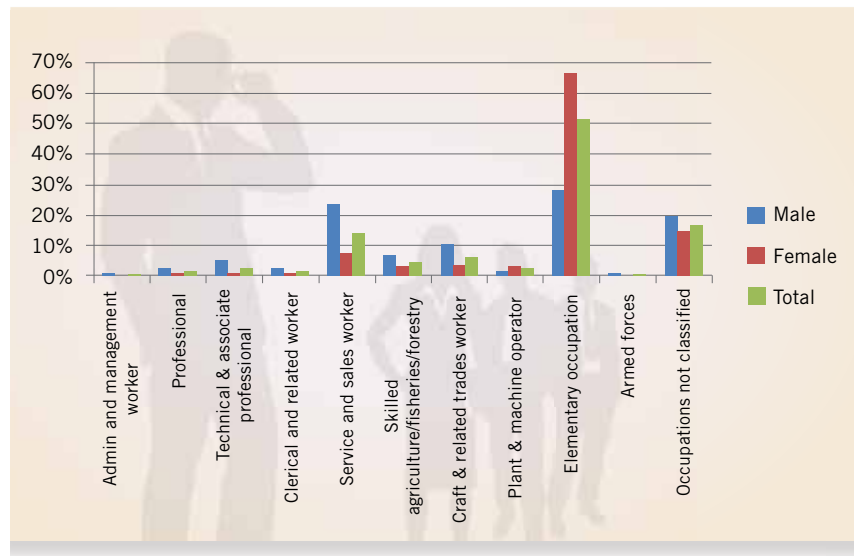


Figure 10: Present occupations of returnee migrant workers (Source: Survey data)

Those who were engaged in any economic activity were further classified under the sector of employment. 54 per cent of the respondents were employed in the private sector and 38 per cent in the informal sector and showed no major gender based differences. None have found employment in the state sector.

As shown in Figure 11, over 25 per cent of the sample was unemployed before migration. Over 74 per cent of the females who have gone on foreign employment did not have prior exposure to working environments in Sri Lanka as they have not been employed in Sri Lanka.

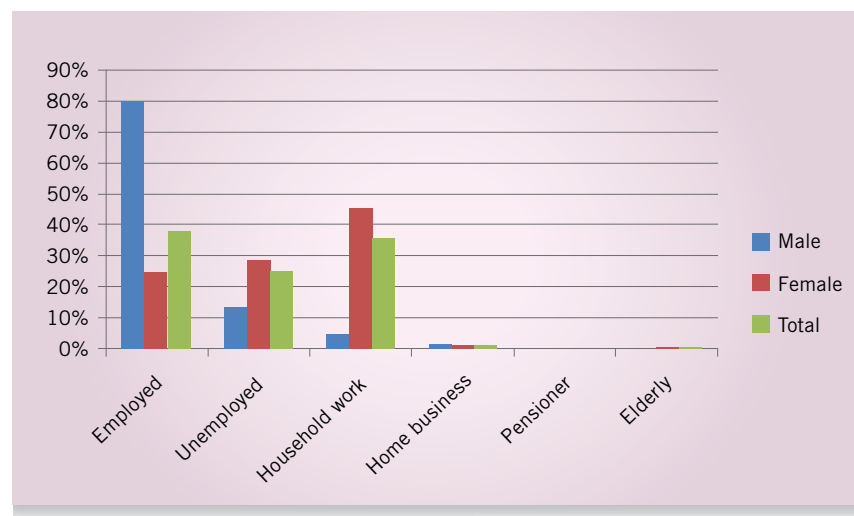


Figure 11: Activity status before migration (Source: Survey data)

As presented in Figure 12, in comparison with the pre-migration phase, the activity status of migrant workers has not shown any significant pattern of change. In fact, the only significant change has been a reduction of the percentage employed by 2.8 per cent.

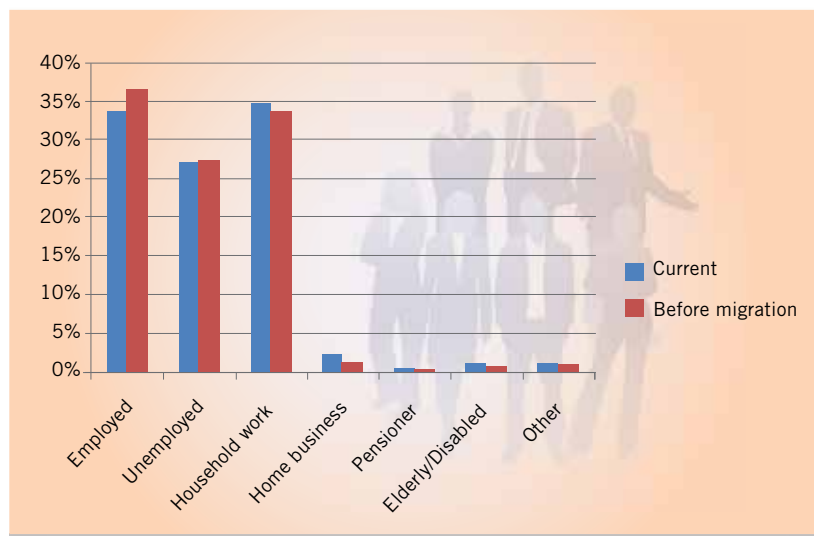


Figure 12: Activity status of returnee migrant workers (See map 4) (Source: Survey data)

In most cases where females have been employed, they have been engaged in such employment as the secondary means of income generation.

It is the informal sector that many rely on employment to make ends meet. In spite of the disparities, presented in Figure 13, 40 per cent of the employed migrant workers earn between Rs. 10,000 and 20,000 (approximately USD 77-155). Therefore, the experience and exposure to overseas employment has not made a clear impact on the wage scales or the nature of employment. The reason for this needs to be explored further.

The current income of the migrant workers engaged in economic activities after their return provides an interesting set of figures as shown in Figure 13. Considering the current monthly income of the employed returnee migrant workers, it is seen that most of the males (53 per cent) earn between Rs. 10,000 and 20,000 (approximately USD 77-155) and 26 per cent of the males earn over Rs. 20,001 (USD 155). Comparatively, females earn less. 24 per cent earn below Rs. 5,000 (Approximately USD 39 or less) whereas most (43 per cent) earn between Rs. 5,000-10,000 (approximately Rs. 39-77) per month. It is only 32 per cent of the females who earn over Rs. 10,000 (approximately USD 77). These incomes are not very high and many employed persons are likely to face continued economic difficulties if this trend continues. There is a clear need to improve their skills and income levels upon return for more effective and smooth reintegration.

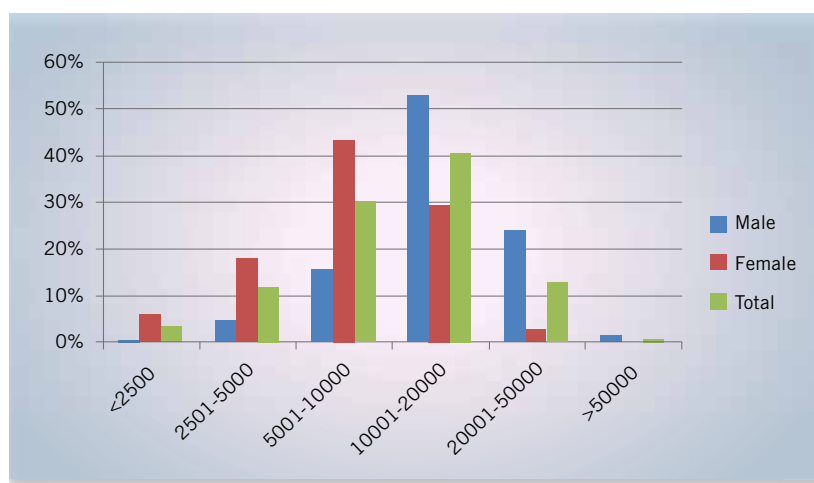


Figure 13: Present income of returnee migrant workers (See map 5) (Source: Survey data)

Prior to migration, 75 per cent of the migrants have earned between Rs. 5,000 and 20,000 (Figure 14). Males have earned more than the females as in the case of post-migration. 83 per cent of the females have earned less than Rs. 10,000 per month whereas 59 per cent of the males have earned over Rs. 10,000 per month. When pre-migration incomes are compared with post-return incomes, there is a significant upward trend in earned incomes. Yet, it is difficult to say whether there has been an increase in real income when income levels are adjusted for inflation.

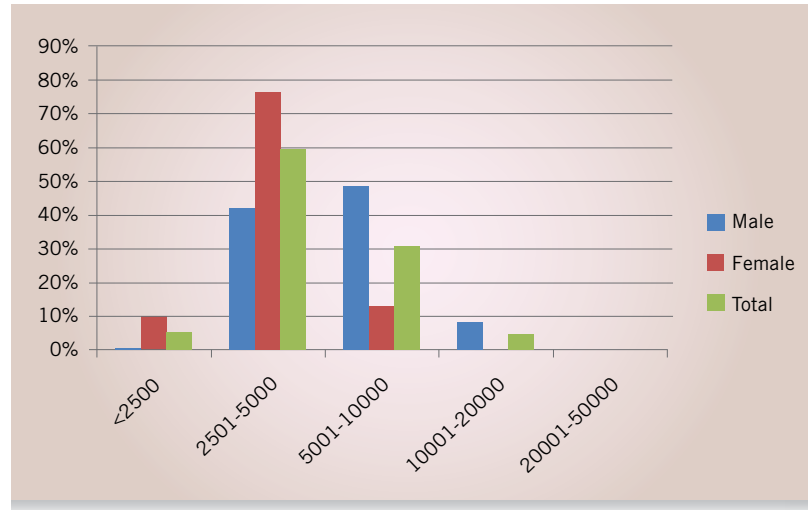


Figure 14: Income of returnee migrant workers before migration (Source: Survey data)

The benchmarks set by males and females as ideal salary scales differ significantly. It is only 13 per cent of the employed who had any savings at the completion of the last job in Sri Lanka. It again shows that 87 per cent of the migrant workers were without sufficient savings which had placed them in an extremely vulnerable situation without virtually any bargaining power. In addition 25 per cent of the migrant workers did not have adequate incomes due to being unemployed prior to migration, placing them in a vulnerable position. The relatively low income means that they have less funds for investment while they have to spend most of their income for sustenance.

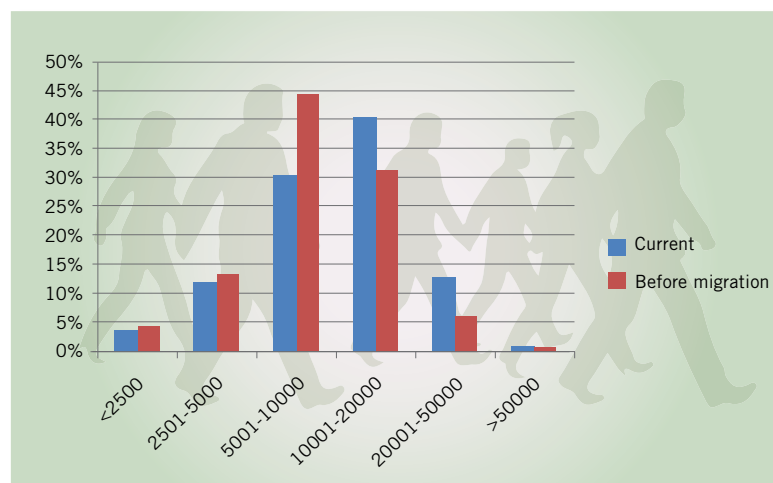


Figure 15: Income levels of migrant worker before migration and after return (Source: Survey data)

It is clearly seen in Figure 15 that the income levels have increased in the post return context. The number of people in the “under Rs. 5,000 earning group” has reduced whereas the number of people in the “over Rs. 10,000 category” has increased. This reflects the trend of more people shifting from the under Rs.10,000 income category to over Rs. 10,000 category. However, it is not as much as it is seen if the values are taken in terms of real income. It should also be highlighted that despite foreign employment, acquiring of new skills and experience, most people still earn SLR 20,000 or less

However, the increase in income levels and engaging in foreign employment has resulted in reducing the number of Samurdhi recipients from 26 per cent of the total before migration to 15 per cent after returning. It is likely that these families have been removed from the list of beneficiaries subsequent to migration as directed by the Samurdhi Authority. What is noteworthy is that 15 per cent of the families continue to receive such benefits post-return, perhaps indicating their unchanged poverty status. Which indicates migration does not necessarily translate to reduced poverty status.

It is not only the returnee migrant worker who contributes to the household income level. Spouse, parents and also some of the children of migrants also bring in revenue. The majority (58 per cent) of the families have a combined household income between SLR 10,000-25,000 as shown in Figure 16. About 25 per cent of the families have an income over Rs. 25,000, which is a significant amount. It also gives a justification for the axing of Samurdhi benefits by the authorities.

The earning capacities, level/type of overseas employment (low skilled or skilled) and the bargaining capacity of migrant workers that will be discussed later on in this report show significant sex based differences.

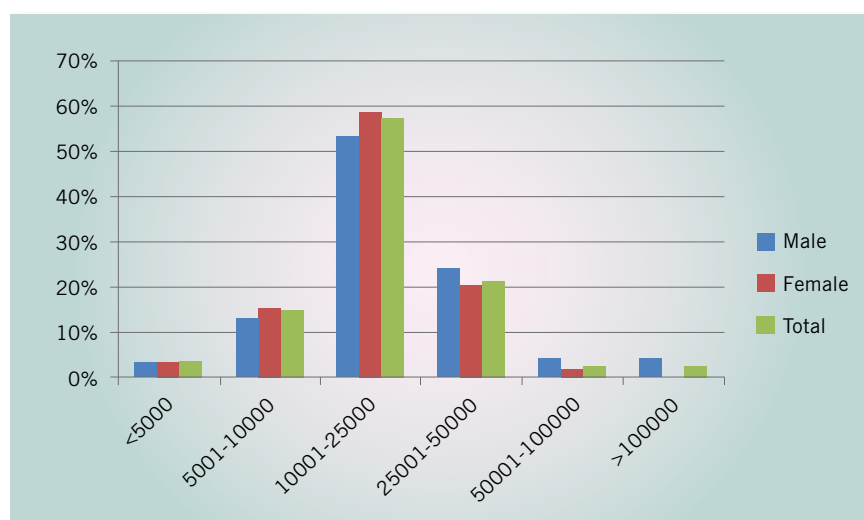


Figure 16: Household income levels -All sources of income combined (Source: Survey data)

As seen in Figure 17, prior to migration 62 per cent of the employed (50 per cent of males and 74 per cent females) were working as day wage manual workers. However, out of the economically active, as a whole, only 25 per cent of the sample were employed in the professional and vocational grades combined prior to migration. There is also a significant number of males (34 per cent combined) who were employed in professional and vocational grades in comparison to the proportion of females (16 per cent) in the same grades.

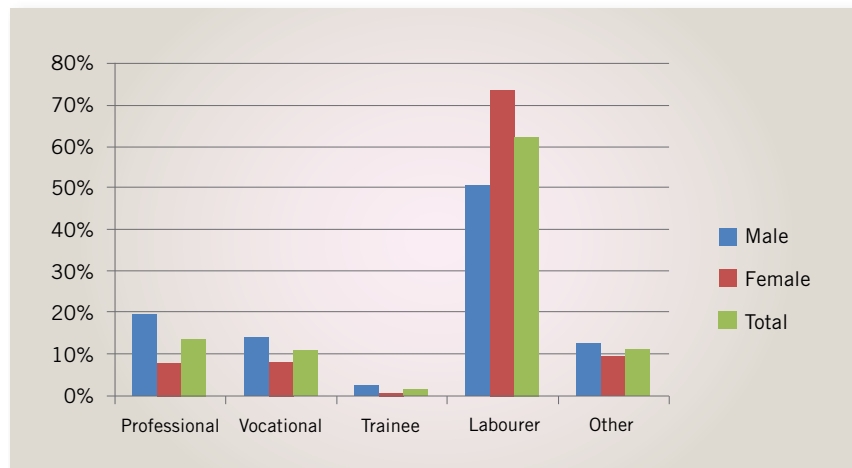


Figure 17: Level of employment – Before Migration (Source: Survey data)

71 per cent of the employed (74 per cent of males and 69 per cent females) have worked in Sri Lanka as casual workers. However, there is also 17 per cent of the employed who have enjoyed permanent jobs in Sri Lanka who have left those jobs for foreign employment which in turn explains the nature of dissatisfaction that the people have with their jobs in Sri Lanka. Any form of social security such as pension, EPF, insurance were available only for 8 per cent of the sample (29 per cent of the employed) and indicates the push factors that Sri Lanka presents for foreign employment. 77 per cent of the males and 65 per cent of females who were employed have not enjoyed any form of social security. The level of social security and welfare appears to be a major motivating factor for labour migration.

Most of the employed have operated within a close range from their home and it is relatively a minor proportion that has lived away from home or has been boarded to be employed far away from home while they were living in Sri Lanka. Therefore a majority of the employed travelled to work from home and had close ties with the family structure.

As shown in Figure 18, 35 per cent of the economically active persons have worked within their own GN Division. More females (42 per cent) than males (29 per cent) have worked within the GN Division. In contrast, more males (37 per cent) than females (25 per cent) have opted to work outside the GN Division before their migration.

Kumara, a 33 year old male from Gampaha: “If we had any economic avenues locally, we wouldn’t have migrated for employment.”

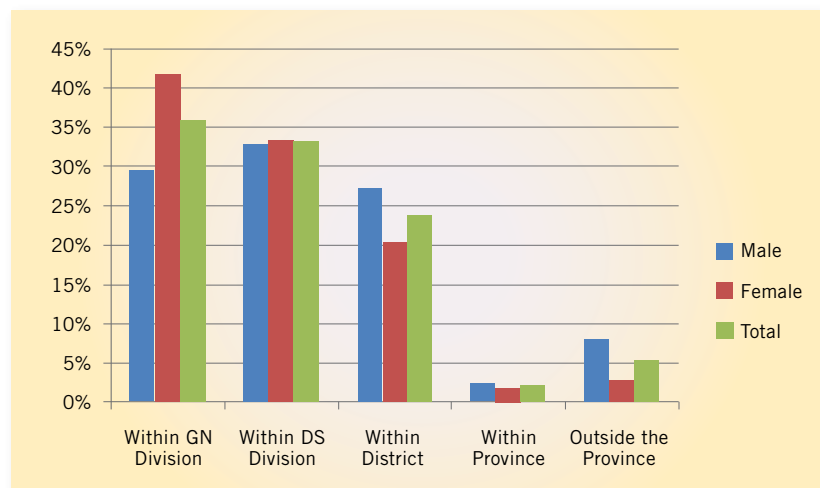


Figure 18: Location of work - before migration (Source: Survey data)

As most of the families with a migrant worker lack cultivable land or any productive land, they are constrained with resources to invest on their sustenance and development. 98 per cent of the sample had not mentioned about the ownership of cultivable lands. 61 per cent of the sample had lands (land in which the house is built) less than 10 perches in size. This is a significant finding in view of the fact that many migrant workers are from rural areas. The lack of cultivable land no doubt pushed them into unstable wage labour with relatively low incomes.

The major push factor resulting in people being increasingly interested in foreign employment is the lack of economic opportunities within Sri Lanka or not being connected with such opportunities upon their return. Furthermore, it seems that most of the migrant workers are scattered in pockets of communities with substantial economic marginalization. Industries that provide employment to them are scarce. Due to the lack of opportunities, employers have a surplus of labour and have a free license to manage their cadre at will without paying much attention to employee satisfaction and wages. Returnee migrants who are employed do not get acceptable salaries and other benefits in addition to their jobs not being permanent. Salaries are in most cases insufficient to manage day to day expenses and the ever increasing cost of living; therefore the opportunities to save are minimal considering the average wage or returnee migrants.

4.3. Skill Profile of Migrant Workers

As far as reintegration of returnee migrant workers are concerned, it is ultimately their skill profile that should be taken into account when devising strategies for effective utilisation of human resources which can contribute to the national economy.

When taking into account the level of education of the returnee migrant workers, presented in Table 5, it is seen that most of those who remain in elementary occupations upon return, represent low educational attainment up to post primary level (who drop out without passing the GCE Ordinary Level examination). However there are 17 per cent who are GCE Advance Level qualified and 42 per cent who have passed the GCE Ordinary Level exams and who are employed in elementary occupations. This reflects the nature and extent of underemployment among returnee migrant workers. Persons with secondary education are highly trainable for more skilled employment.

However, there are still difficulties in finding employment in sectors that require higher skills. Further, those who are already employed in the clerical, service and sales categories along with experience and exposure could be promoted to the next level of employment to perform more responsible activities in administration, management, technical or professional work. Occupations not classified generally fall into the informal sector, which provides unstable and insecure employment. Their financial management capacities need to be enhanced in order to utilise their full potential.

Occupation	Formal education	Primary education	Post primary	GCE O/L passed	GCE A/L passed	Graduate or higher
Admin/management/ Professional technical	0%	0%	2.30%	7.83%	2.96%	100%
Clerical/ Service and sales	11.76%	10.64%	13.43%	21.08%	34.15%	0%
Skilled agriculture/fisheries/forestry	7.84%	6.38%	3.84%	3.61%	4.88%	0%
Craft & related trades worker	0%	4.26%	5.54%	8.43%	14.63%	0%
Plant & machine operator	3.92%	0%	2.99%	1.81%	2.44%	0%
Elementary occupation	64.71%	54.61%	54.80%	42.17%	17.07%	0%
Armed forces	0%	0.71%	0%	1.20%	0%	0%
Occupations not classified	11.76%	23.40%	17.27%	13.86%	4.88%	0%

Table 5: Educational attainment and present employment (See map 7) (Source: Survey data)

As shown in Figure 19, over 50 per cent of the sample represents persons with post primary level education. This category is capable of acquiring skills at vocational level. 22 per cent of the females and 10 per cent of the males are in the combined no formal or primary education level. This is the group hardest to provide training to. The group that has passed the GCE O/L and beyond can be trained to become workers at a professional level. While those at graduate level can become professionals in high-skill areas. Generally, the returnees with graduate or higher levels of education, reintegrate better and faster as they gain skills and knowledge along with the overseas exposure and are better equipped to take on the job market. It is mostly those who dropped out from school before or soon after the compulsory education age of 14 years who become the most vulnerable. Considering the social and cultural settings of most of the communities covered by the study, it is apparent that parents being concerned about the education of children is low.

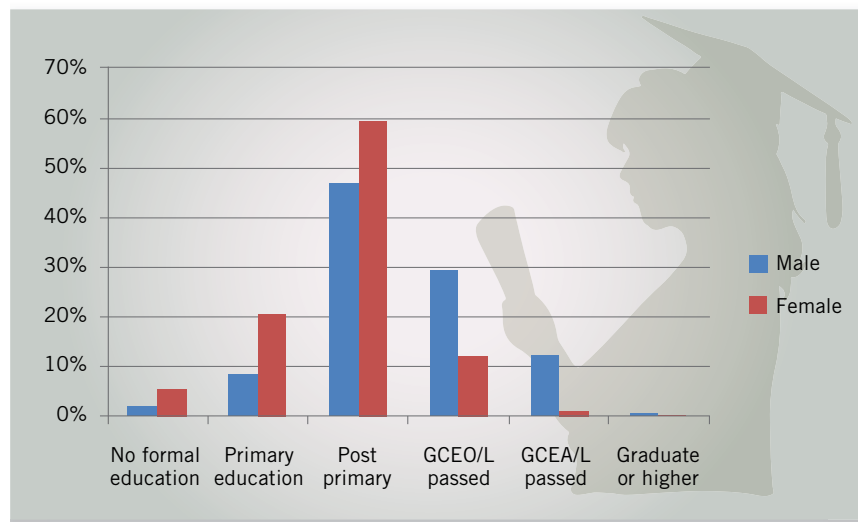


Figure 19: Level of formal education (See map 3) (Source: Survey data)

Acquisition of skills after formal education in Sri Lanka prior to migration is another aspect of the returnees that is important. Training is obtained by various means and it is only 38 per cent of the males and 11 per cent of the females (17 per cent of the total sample) that have obtained training on top of their education. Considering the fact that a majority of the female workers do not possess any formal or informal training prior to migration, they are the group that requires the most amount of support in reintegration interventions upon returning to Sri Lanka. As shown in Figure 20, most of the training that the migrant workers undergo prior to migration are formal. Such formal trainings is obtained by 60 per cent of those who have obtained any form of training.

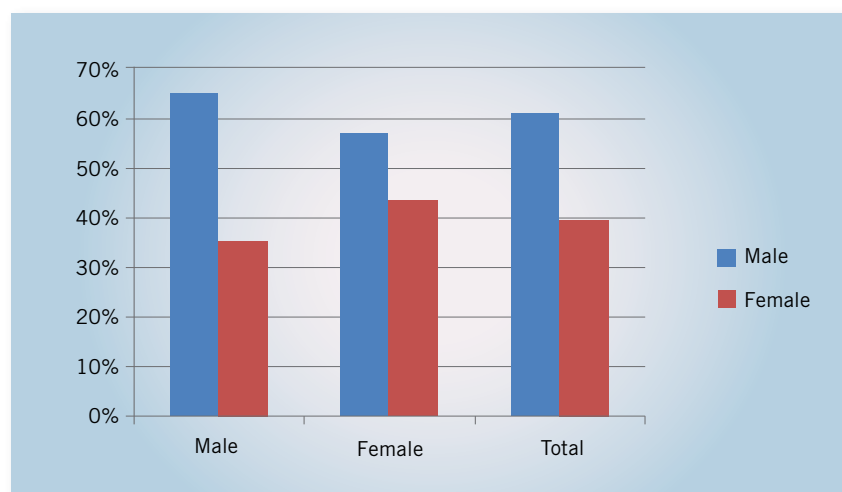


Figure 20: Nature of training obtained prior to migration (See map 6) (Source: Survey data)

Out of all the training that migrant workers undergo prior to departure, 58 per cent of the training has been obtained prior to being employed in Sri Lanka. Whereas 42 per cent of the training has been conducted during employment. Prospective employees engage in training voluntarily in order to capture a niche in the job market. 37 per cent of the training has been funded by the employers and 46 per cent of the training has been self-financed, whereas 16 per cent of the training has been funded jointly by the employer and the person trained. It is also partly because skill acquisition is mostly done by those who have at least secondary education, which in most cases is a pre-requisite. Skill acquisition is done rarely by the ones who have dropped out from school prematurely.

Even in the case of training, within the period of foreign employment, it is only on rare occasions that migrant workers have undergone training of some sort while in service. It is also evident that the semi skilled workers have better capacity to acquire new skills in comparison to the unskilled workers and the semi skilled workers have more access to meaningful on-the-job training which general unskilled workers do not enjoy.

Kumara, a 33 year old male from Gampaha: “Before leaving for foreign employment I was a tile layer. I was able to acquire new skills like using precision tools for fine craftsmanship. Because of the quality of work, I now get enough contracts and I am earning twice as much as I used to earn before I left.”

The reality is that it is only a minute proportion of migrant workers are employed in a professional type of employment (Figure 21). However, it should be mentioned that the purposive sampling method used resulted in oversampling of the most vulnerable group of returnee migrant workers that could have led to slight over representation of unskilled migrant workers.

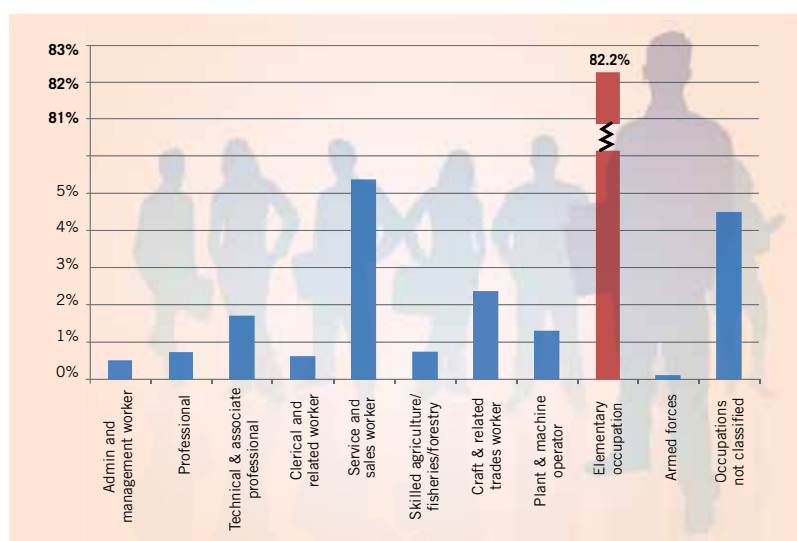


Figure 21: Type of employment during foreign employment (Source: Survey data)

Most of the jobs available for Sri Lankans in the destination countries according to the categorization of ILO standards are considered as elementary occupations that include providing manual labour, engaging in informal day waged jobs. Trades classified as technical and sales, craft and related trades, machine operators etc... contribute a small proportion.

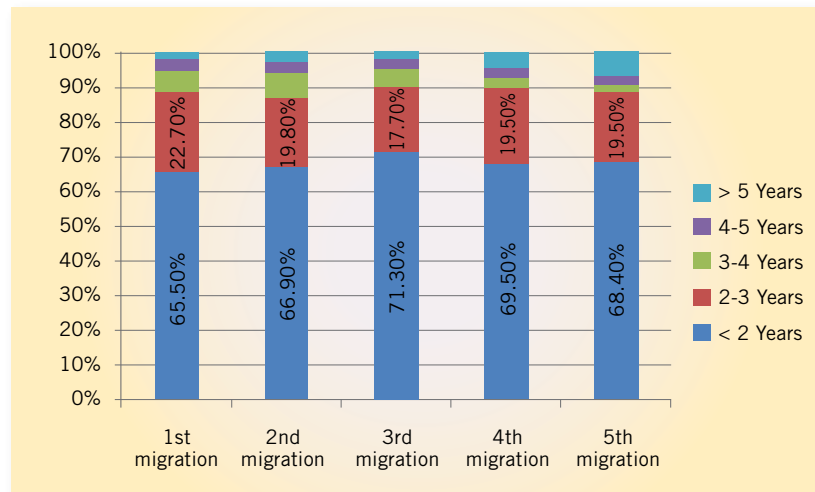


Figure 22: Duration of each migration (Source: Survey data)

As most contracts in many countries are given for migrant workers for a period of two years, it is seen (Figure 22) that most of the workers return after completion of two years of contracted service. However there is also around 20 per cent of the migrant workers who stay beyond two years on a given contract. There is a minority of workers (3 per cent-5 per cent) who continue their employment in one destination for over five years.

Since the majority of the sample represents a labour force with a lower level of educational attainment, it again emphasises the need for the introduction of vocational training to equip the most vulnerable women and men to be economically reintegrated.

Some of the areas discussed above are important in understanding the nature, extent and effectiveness of migration for employment. The demographic, social, economic profiles as well as the skill base of migrant workers shed light on the areas that should be critically looked at in order to devise strategies for reintegration of returnee migrant workers.



5 Patterns of Remittances Utilization

The patterns of utilisation of remittances by migrant workers and their families during overseas employment of the migrant worker is an important aspect in addressing the concerns of returnee migrant workers and deriving strategies for effective reintegration. In this chapter the discussion would mainly focus on the economic gains at family level.

When discussing the economic situation it is important to discuss the matter on macro economic as well as micro economic scales. As a nation, Sri Lanka depends heavily on the remittances of migrant workers and it has in fact surpassed the amount of foreign exchange earned through tea and garment exports. Therefore, foreign employment has become essential to sustain Sri Lanka's economy. Even though the earnings that migrant workers bring into Sri Lanka are substantial, the translation of the income into productive investment at family level needs discussion.

Migrating to overcome economic problems is the most common reason given to justify migration for employment. In the first migration, 65 per cent of respondents said they migrated mainly to overcome economic problems. There is no significant variation between males and females with regard to reasons to migrate. The percentage comes down to 57 per cent on the fourth migration. However, in the fifth migration, the priority is given for the education of children and the parents move offshore for employment in order to cover children's educational expenses. The priority motive for migration changes from sustaining the family in the first and second migrations to development in later migrations (Figure 23).

However, the above scenario could also be at least partly induced by the lack of employment opportunities in Sri Lanka. On the other hand, it could also explain the scarcity of jobs for people who were employed in foreign countries for long periods. It could be due to the saturation of the job market, the local systems' inability to absorb cadre or the inability of migrant workers to adapt to the local job environments after a few terms of migration.

Building a house is also seen as a priority that has been consistent throughout all migrations (Figure 24). Around 15 per cent-25 per cent have seen the building of a house as a priority. This could be due to the social pressure for migrant workers to move out of relative poverty in generally less privileged communities and the ownership or construction of one's own house being seen as a social status symbol.

Although the migrant workers engage in foreign employment a few times, the enthusiasm and the will to send money home regularly shrinks even though the need to earn and save remains relatively constant.

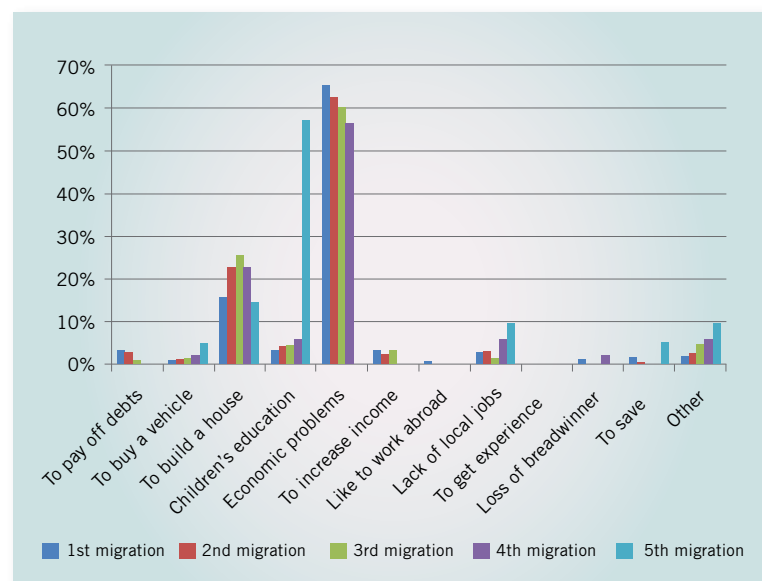


Figure 23: Reasons to engage in foreign employment (Source: Survey data)

It is seen that most of the (over 93 per cent) migrant workers sampled, have sent remittances home using formal banking systems and international money transfers. However, out of the rest, 3.4 per cent have not received a salary at all which is alarming.

People migrate for foreign employment for an array of reasons as explained earlier. However, the expenditure pattern shows the earnings are in fact used for a multiplicity of activities including covering of day to day expenditure at home, investment and also misuse in the form of spending on alcohol and sometimes, non-essential electrical and electronic appliances. Which means the original reason for migration is not fulfilled. Even though it is only 3 per cent who prioritize paying off debts as a key area of spending remittances, 16 per cent of the migrants at least invest part of their earnings towards the settling of debts. As expected, housing is one of the key forms of investment and 15 per cent of migrant workers spend a part of their earnings towards improvement of the housing situation. Even though only 2 per cent of the migrants anticipate on investing earnings for the future 4 per cent invest their earnings in the form of buying land, developing businesses and paying dowry for children as seen on most occasions, in the form of gold. It seems that a significant proportion (17 per cent) of the migrant workers do spend on geriatric care and to buy medication for ageing parents.

Through Focused Group Discussions it was observed that there were cultural reasons that were behind the pattern of expenditure and investment among migrant workers. Even though it is predominantly economic reason that mobilize prospective migrant workers, there are specific stimulations that motivate people to engage in foreign employment.

Urban underserved settlements in Colombo, Kandy and also the urban areas of Gampaha show the existence of economic marginalization and also high cost of living due to the access to the type of sophistication that urban settlements provide. This is further enhanced by the competition among neighbours. However, in Matale, Kegalle and Ganga Ihala Korale Division of Kandy it is seen that many women tend to go in search of foreign employment in order to accumulate wealth to enhance dowries for their children. Even though Kegalle is situated in the Sabaragamuwa Province, it is the Kandyan tradition that is prevalent, which could be inducing this practice.

In Kalutara, Matara and Galle it was seen that the push towards foreign employment has been induced by the impact of the 2004 Tsunami which took away a lifetime or more of savings and accumulated wealth, leading to losing their established financial security. Post-tsunami resettlement programmes that provided housing inland were not effective enough to provide sustainable employment or income generation activities. This resulted in people becoming economically marginalized and being indebted.

In Ratnapura, there is a substantial rich-poor gap and many from disadvantaged communities engage in gem mining directly or indirectly and have an understanding about the prospects if they have investment capacity. Therefore there is a trend in Ratnapura to save some to buy and sell precious stones and to trade or start a business.

In the Vennappuwa area, among the reasons to migrated included the need to buy electronic goods such as music systems, television sets and furniture. Going abroad seems to be a fashion and a way of life and there are many from communities in Vennappuwa who have migrated legally or illegally to Italy. Furthermore one of the key reasons for women to engage in foreign employment is to gain finances to place their children in reputed schools, which in fact suggests that having more money can induce a guarantee of getting access to quality schooling.

Similar to Vennappuwa, in Kurunegala there are relatively abundant economic opportunities within the informal sector dealing with coconut based products and other industries. However, interestingly it is mostly the incentive packages that the foreign employment agencies offer that have been able to attract people into foreign employment. Unlike in most other locations that came into the study, there are a large number

of foreign employment agencies in the Kurunegala District and there is competition among them to attract prospective migrant workers. Therefore they go to the extent of offering incentives that is not common in other areas. Families with a migrant worker receiving Rs. 80,000 upfront and the foreign employment agency taking care of all direct and indirect costs of migration, are not at all uncommon in this area.

In Badulla, Welimada, Nuwaragampalatha in Anuradhapura and in Lahugala and Maha Oya in Ampara most of the families of migrant workers provide manual labour in the estates and agricultural sector either directly or indirectly. They also grow agricultural produce to a certain extent but do not have land ownership. Therefore they continue to work on a half share basis, which is generally favourable for land owners. This process places the farmer at an even greater risk due to the non-availability of a guaranteed market for their produce, thus making them continuously indebted. Engaging in foreign employment is seen as a last viable resort to overcome the debt crisis.

Muslim communities in Mawanella, Koralaipattu South, Kattankudy, Kalpitiya, Medawachchiya show a significant uniqueness in their motives to engage in foreign employment. The sub-agents play a major role in recruitment for foreign employment. Sub-agents operate with the blessings of the respected people in the community and their role as well as any issues pertaining to foreign employment is generally not spoken out in public.

Field supervisor: "Accessing the community in Mawanella to collect data from returnee migrant workers was nearly impossible. Therefore an informal community structure in the area was created through a Moulavi who 'reluctantly' provided his consent to conduct data collection. The case was quite similar in most of the other areas with high Muslim populations"

When it comes to the motive to engage in foreign employment in Muslim communities, it is seen that investing on livestock is a profitable business. There are returnees, or husbands of the female returnees who have invested in livestock with the remittances as a means of livelihood

In general the nature and extent of the positive and negative impacts at the family level also depend on the destination country, their way of life and in the case of housemaids, the needs and background of the employer, socio economic context and the political and legal setting.

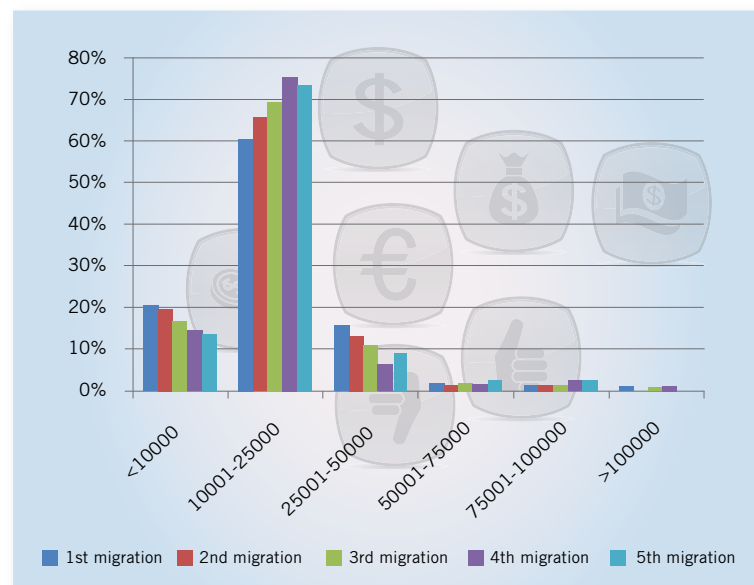


Figure 24: Income of migrant workers in SLR (Source: Survey data)

Income is the single most important incentive for people to consider foreign employment. As shown in Figure 24, there are around 20 per cent of migrant workers who are employed for less than Rs. 10,000 per

month (approximately US\$ 100 or less per month) which is by all means a poor payment. It also explains the nature of earnings that such migrant workers enjoyed before migration. However a majority of migrant workers (60 per cent-72 per cent) get a salary between Rs. 10,000 - 25,000 (US\$100-250). Less than 4 per cent of the migrant workers earn over Rs. 50,000 per month (US\$ 500).

It is important to see the size of the income, the real income in terms of US\$ and how the earnings are used at the family level. It is merely an explanation of the stagnant nature of or even depletion of salary scales of migrant workers over time. The representation of over SLR 50,000 categories had shrunk with the number of migrations. It is only the below SLR 10,000 group that shifts on to the SLR 10,001-25,000 category but many fail to earn more than SLR 25,000 in any given migration term.

Earning capacity of males in relation to the capacity of females is significantly high. Further the increase of earnings over a few migrations is also evident among males than among females. The over SLR 50,000 earners are hardly visible among female migrant workers. However, among the males, the over SLR. 50,000 earning category is over 12 per cent. Even the SLR 25,001-50,000 columns are much higher among males than among females.

Therefore it can be stated that around 90 per cent of females earn not more than SRL 25,000. In contrast it is around 46 per cent of males that fall into the same category. 50 per cent of males earn over SLR. 25,000. In contrast only around 10 per cent of females earn over SLR 25,000.

The salary scales differ vastly across male and female migrant workers (Figure 25). It is also influenced by the nature of the jobs performed by males and females, the skill levels, work experience in Sri Lanka with males dominating in a majority of professional and technical areas.

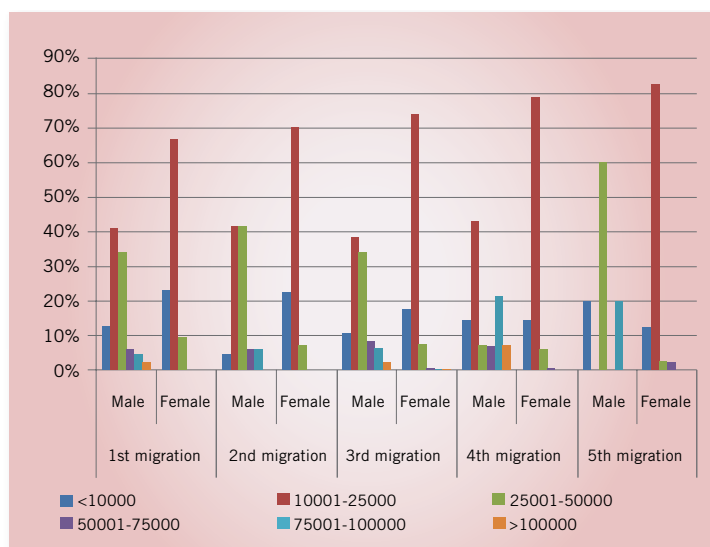


Figure 25: Sex wise breakdown of earnings in SLR (Source: Survey data)

Even though the earnings are as seen above, in reality it could be even less. When inquired about the monthly salary, the automatic answer is the amount received monthly, but there are many who have not received a salary for two months as contractually agreed, hence reducing the actual average monthly earning.

Anusha, a 41 year old female from Kurunegala: "I did not receive the promised salary. I was promised Rs. 30,000 but was given only 18,000 per month. My salary for the past two months was also deducted by employer"

As seen in Figure 26, Sending home remittances is generally done regularly or mostly on a monthly basis. There is a clear pattern that is gender specific. Females send 60 per cent of remittances on a regular basis in their first migration and during subsequent migrations the frequency is maintained around 60 per cent

but with a slight upward trend. In contrast, 70 per cent of males send remittances home regularly during their first migration and in subsequent migrations the same indicator reduces from 70 per cent to 50 per cent. The percent of occasional senders of remittances among males increase from 23.9 per cent during the first migration to 24.4 per cent during the second migration, 28 per cent during the third migration, 37.5 per cent during the fourth migration and 50 per cent during the fifth migration.

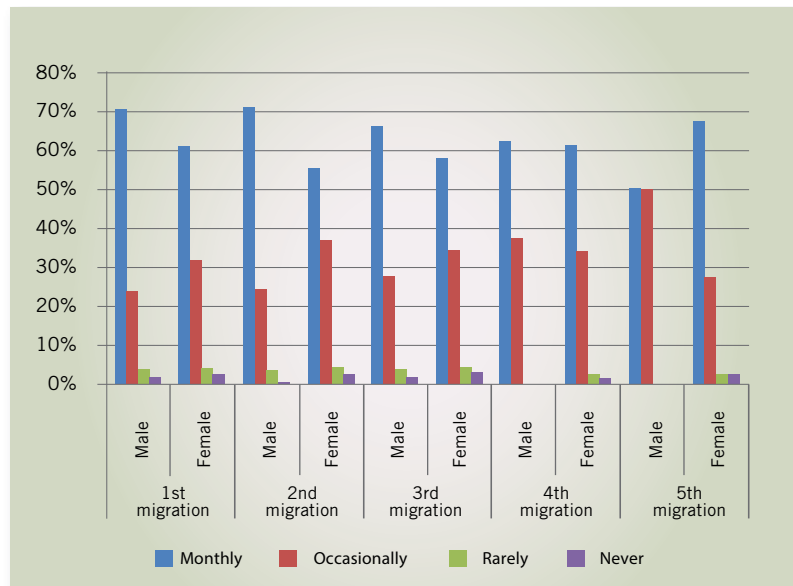


Figure 26: Frequency of sending remittances home (Source: Survey data)

Generally it is seen that almost all migrant workers send at least 75 per cent of their foreign earnings to Sri Lanka on a regular basis or at least occasionally. During the first migration many families totally depended on the migrant's earnings for sustenance. However, in the second and third migrations dependence on the migrant worker's salary on average reduces. It is mostly the persons with families that rely solely on the migrant's income that are compelled to allow the migrant worker to leave for foreign employment on a fourth, fifth or more times (Figure 27).

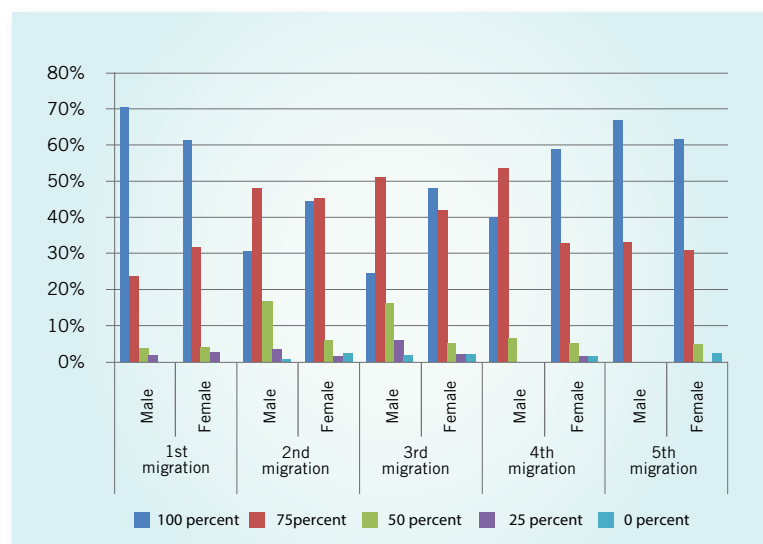


Figure 27: Dependence of family on remittances (Source: Survey data)

Investments can also be seen as another important means of measuring overall economic impact of the migrant workers at family level. The nature and effectiveness of investments that have been made by returnee migrant workers is taken into consideration. Improvements in the housing situation, investing on children's education and to increase personal assets are among the major areas of investments.

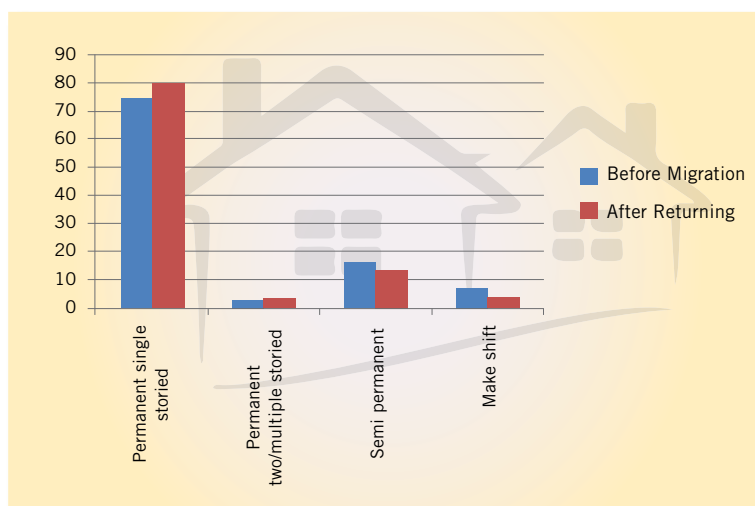


Figure 28: Dwelling type before migration and after return (Source: Survey data)

Firstly, when the situation of housing is considered, it is clear that poor housing was one of the major reasons to migrate and it is also reflected in Figure 28. The number of makeshift and semi-permanent housing units have reduced whereas the permanent single and multiple storied housing units have increased from around 9 per cent after returning.

It should also be noted that many returnees have made significant improvement to existing housing units. Improvements such as plastering of the brick walls and refurbishments have resulted in an increase in overall satisfaction level and the maintenance of social status. Further, the improvement of toilets and sanitation facilities of houses too are key areas that result in a multiplicity of positive outcome like improved health and access to sanitation.

Even though the housing units are mostly permanent, the floor areas of housing units are generally small. When considering the floor areas of the current dwellings as shown in Figure 29, 12 per cent of the houses have floor areas less than 200 square feet.

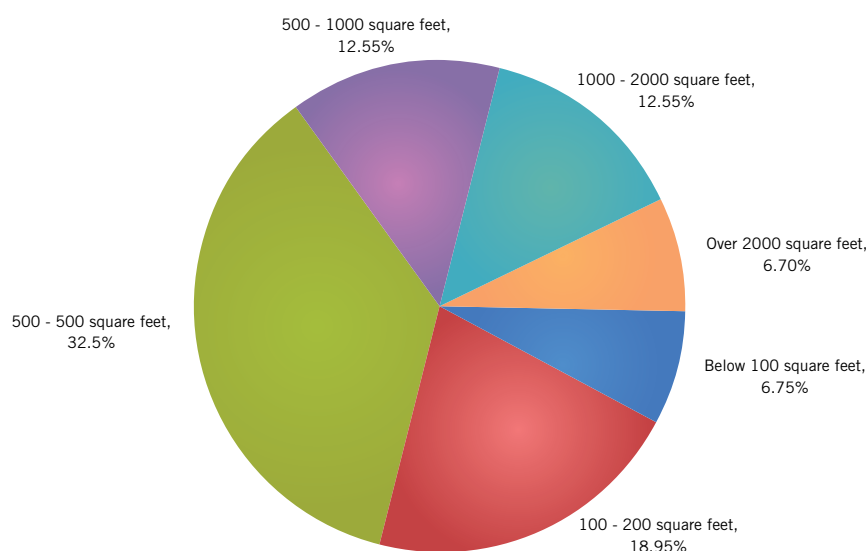


Figure 29: Floor area of the present house (Source: Survey data)

The extent of land (Figure 30) in possession is another important factor to be considered. Most of the returnee migrant workers had land less than 10 perches in size. It is mostly in the rural areas that people tend to have relatively larger plots. Even if they have larger portions of land in the peripheries, they have

many issues regarding legal ownership such as shared properties, fragmentation of land among siblings, unauthorized squatting on government land etc.

Landlessness and in general land insecurity is a major factor that makes most of the migrant workers vulnerable. For example, if migrant workers had sufficient lands, home lands and cultivable land they would not have fallen into the debt crisis that is one of the key reasons leading to migration.

It is only an insignificant proportion of migrant workers who actually have paddy lands or agricultural lands. 97.7 per cent have not mentioned the availability of such lands. The extent of landlessness or near landlessness seems to be widespread among migrant families and this no doubt contributes to their poverty and vulnerability.,

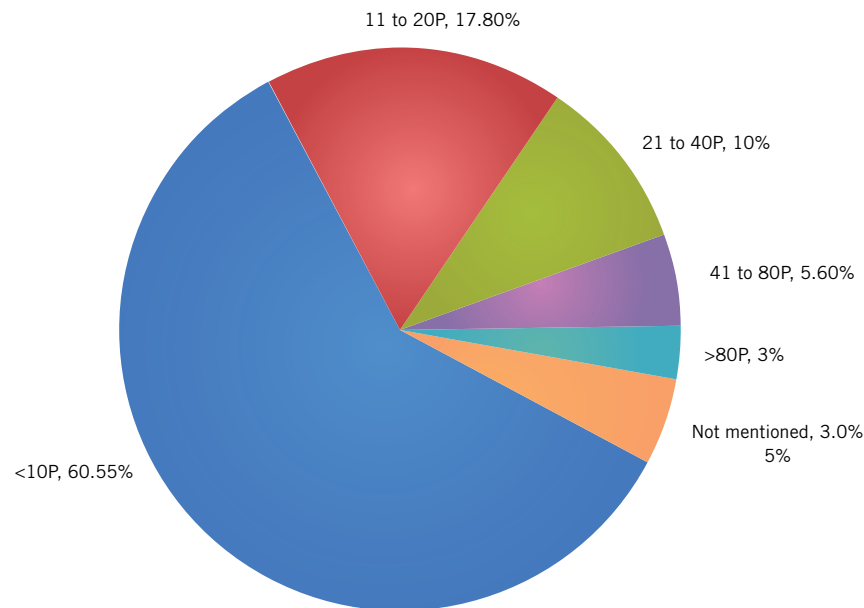


Figure 30: Extent of Land ownership (Source: Survey data)

Consumable assets have increased vastly as shown in Figure 31. Every item in the list has shown significant increases. For example there is a 14 per cent increase in access to electricity supply. While this is a clear indication of the improvement of social status of a family, it also leads to more purchasing of consumables such as electrical appliances such as television sets, refrigerators and sound systems.

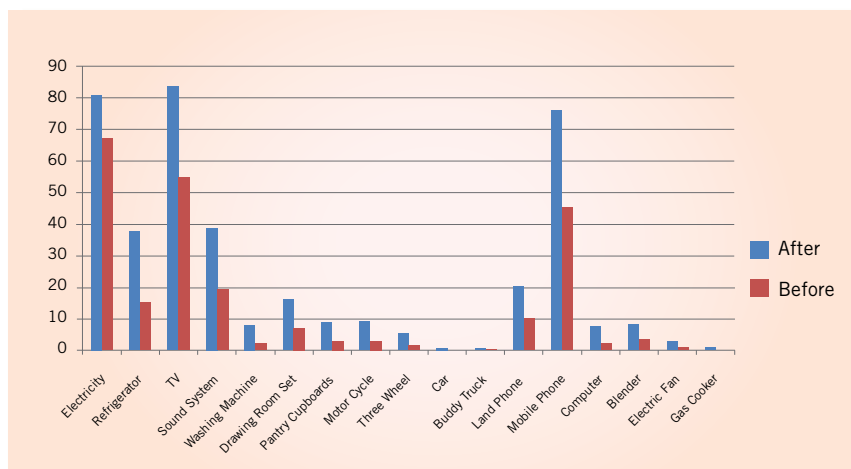


Figure 31: Unproductive and consumable assets before migration and after return (Source: Survey data)

The use of both fixed and mobile phones too have increased significantly. Washing machines and drawing room sets too have shown significant increases. It is only a minor proportion of the returnee migrant workers who have been able to afford a car, but increase in the number of motorcycles is clearly seen.

The above instruments and equipment generally involve an additional investment or increase in recurrent expenditure due to most of the devices consuming energy that comes with a cost and maintenance.

The availability of productive assets as shown in Figure 32 also show improvements. Although the improvement is evident, the percentage increase of assets is virtually negligible.

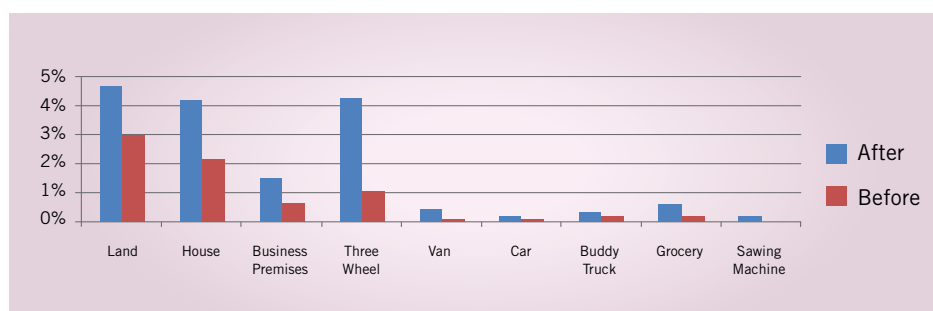


Figure 32: Availability of productive assets before migration and after return. (Source: Survey data)

Buying three wheelers or any vehicle to generate income is seen as a trend. Setting up grocery stores and investing on home businesses are also seen. However, investing on land can be seen as the most important and lasting form of investment.

As it is, less than 5 per cent of the returnee migrant workers invest on productive assets, none of the trends can be interpreted and generalized for the whole population of migrant workers and returnees. In fact, acquisition of productive assets is not very common among returnee migrants and does not seem to make a significant contribution to economic integration upon return.

It is an accepted fact that there is a national significance in remittances earned by migrant workers. However, there is also a debate as to whether the remittances are utilised in a meaningful way at the national to family levels. Through findings it can be summed up that the effectiveness and efficiency of the flow of remittances can be vastly optimised on one hand while utilisation of remittances in a meaningful way at the family level can also be enhanced. There seems to be limited guidance and advice to returnee migrant workers in terms of intelligent investments and savings.

6 Social Impact of Migration for Employment

Considerable economic gains from foreign employment at the national level tend to overshadow the family level and individual level consequences of migration where family wellbeing is often seen to be overlooked as a compromise for economic benefits. There are many success stories but there are also a significant number of families that show the negative social impacts of migration for employment. It requires a thought on what could be the likely long term implications of foreign employment on social and economic status of families of migrant workers that in turn would require extra attention and effort within the strategising of effective reintegration at family and community levels. Analysis will be based on three key areas, namely human trafficking and exploitative labour, child protection aspects and family disputes resulting from labour migration.

Even though foreign employment opportunities are abundantly available, only 40 per cent of all migrant workers go for foreign employment for a second time. However, there is a sizable proportion of first time migrant workers who opt for subsequent episodes of foreign employment.

Fathima, a 27 year old female from Batticalloa: “I was in Saudi Arabia and I was able to adapt to their way of life easily. I could speak Arabic and I wore the same clothes and practiced the same religion. Considering the problems that I currently face, going back for foreign employment is one of the best options I have”

As shown in Figure 33 most of the migrant workers fall away from migration for employment probably due to the weighing of good and bad experiences and impacts of migration on themselves and thier families. Such decisions are highly influenced by individual experiences and perceptions. Ageing is also a factor that acts against repeat migration in some cases.

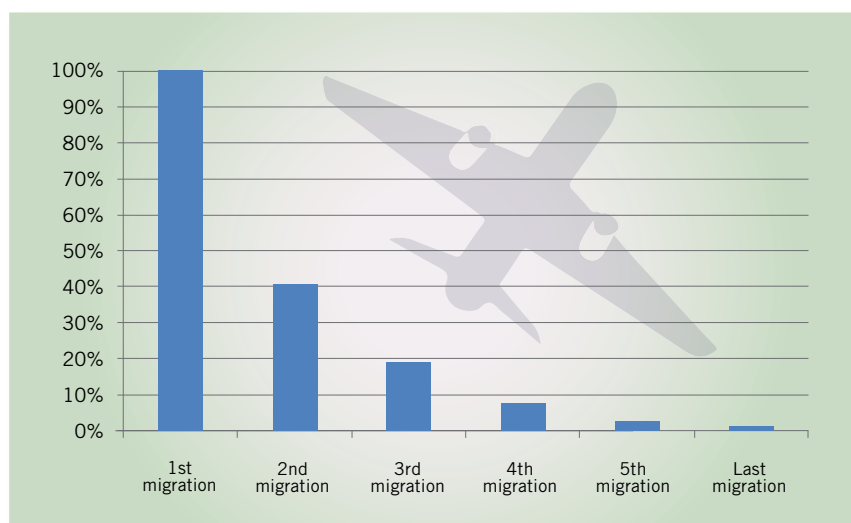


Figure 33: Number of times Migrated (Source: Survey data)

When exploring the gender variation with regard to the above indicator (Figure 34), it seems that males tend to fall off from the repeat foreign employment more than their female counterparts. 18.3 per cent of males and 23.2 per cent females have reengaged in overseas employment. 7.9 per cent of males and 12.7 per cent females go on foreign employment for a third time. While 2 per cent of males and 5.8 per cent females engage in foreign employment for a fourth time. It is only 1.5 per cent of the male migrant workers who migrate for a fifth time. In contrast, 0.2 per cent of female migrant workers are retained in foreign employment for a fifth occasion. This could also be explained in terms of better employment and income earning prospects for males back in Sri Lanka.

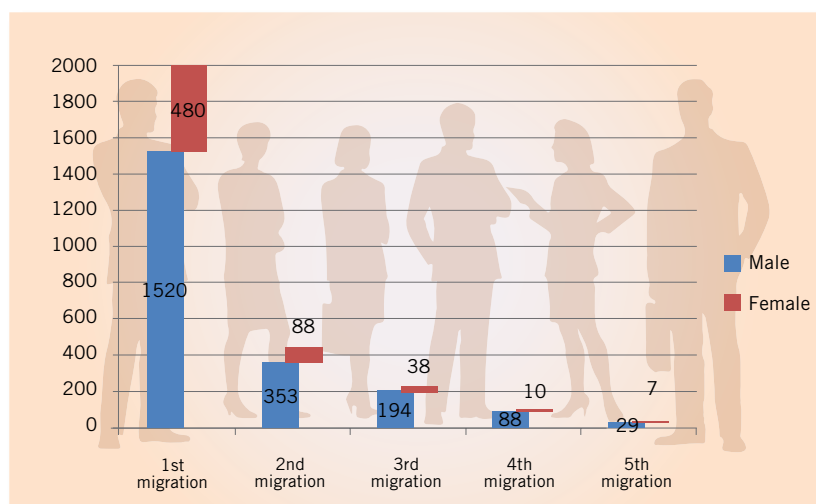


Figure 34: Retention of employees in foreign employment (Source: Survey data)

Therefore, there is a significant proportion of migrant workers who are discouraged about the idea of continuing as a career migrant worker and are ready candidates for reintegration intervention. FGDs, in-depth interviews and informal discussions that were held with returnees confirm that there are many other complex issues leading to engaging in foreign employment on subsequent occasions.

6.1. Exploitation of Migrant Workers and Human Trafficking

Damayanthi, a 35 year old female: widow who migrated to Saudi Arabia for foreign employment. She was sexually abused by the 'baaba', the master of the house and his fourteen year old son on a number of occasions. She has complained to the 'mamma', the lady of the house and her answer had been "you have been brought for all of that". She has not taken any steps to get away from the scenario and expressed that she hated 'baaba'.

The above scenario could also suggest the existence of a larger social reality tied with foreign employment. During many FGDs there were many gestures that were also given along the same lines describing how migrant workers, mainly the women are first raped and coerced into frequent sexual relations. It was also revealed during FGDs that there are many migrant workers who get pregnant in the destination countries and return and have their babies in Sri Lanka.

Abuse of migrant workers, mainly the females who go as house maids is not uncommon. There are many cases where overseas workers are exploited mainly in the form of over-work, under payment and sexual exploitation and even gang rape. In many receiving countries the legal systems seems to protect the interests of the employer over the employee thus placing the migrant workers in a difficult position. This phenomenon will be discussed broadly under the next sub topic.

Human trafficking too is prevalent among migrant workers. Over 20 per cent of the migrant workers interviewed spoke of situations of Trafficking, according to the UN's definition of human trafficking which is trafficked for labour and sexual exploitation. There are migrant workers who have undergone extreme and appalling treatment by their sponsors in the receiving countries.

Kumari, a 38 year old female from Ratnapura: "I slept only 2-3 hours on average per day as I was required to work continuously. I was treated like an animal and I was not provided with clothing"

Sumana, a 43 year old female from Anuradhapura: "I had long hair and I was asked to cut my hair as the lady of the house was jealous that I was getting the attention of the 'baaba'."

Anusha, a 41 year old female from Kurunegala: "I was raped by 'baaba' and I had to work continuously for long hours for which I did not receive any extra payment. I was unable to obtain any support from the foreign employment agency and the Embassy even though I requested for help."

It is mostly females who undergo such torturous situations. 72 per cent of the migrant workers are deprived of leaving the work premises whereas it is 39 per cent of males, still a high percentage, who are confined only to the working premises. Similarly, the passport is withheld by the employer in the case of 74 per cent (80 per cent female and 54 per cent male) migrant workers which is a violation of their basic human rights. Out of the ones whose passports were held by the employers, 45 per cent (54 per cent of males and 43 per cent of females) were able to obtain the passports on a simple request. In other words over 40 per cent of the migrant workers (46 per cent of female and 25 per cent of male) were deprived of having their only form of identity, the passport, with them, during the time of employment.

Facing problems is more common during the first migration. 24 per cent of the total (28 per cent of males and 22 per cent of females) mentioned that they have experienced problems with their employer and employment during the first migration. This is 23.7 per cent of the total sample, or 474 persons out of the 2,000 interviewed. During the second migration, 7 per cent of males and 12 per cent of females had to encountered problems with the employers (11 per cent of the total). By the fifth migration, it was 8 per cent females who felt that they were working for a problem employer. None of the male migrant workers believed so.

However, there was another interpretation to the scenario given by respondents at the FGDs which is that it could be the victims getting used to a particular lifestyle that cannot be compromised. Most of such cases go undetected through interviews held with returnee migrant workers as they rarely visit Sri Lanka and remain mainly overseas. There have been instances where such migrant workers have completely detached themselves from the husband and children and have started a new life overseas. In the case of males, it is seen that some of them engage in extramarital relationships while overseas and return home after completion of the contracts. Such cases could be regarded as potential sources of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV & AIDS.

Table 6 provides in detail the extent and the nature of forced labour and exploitative working conditions that some migrant workers go through.

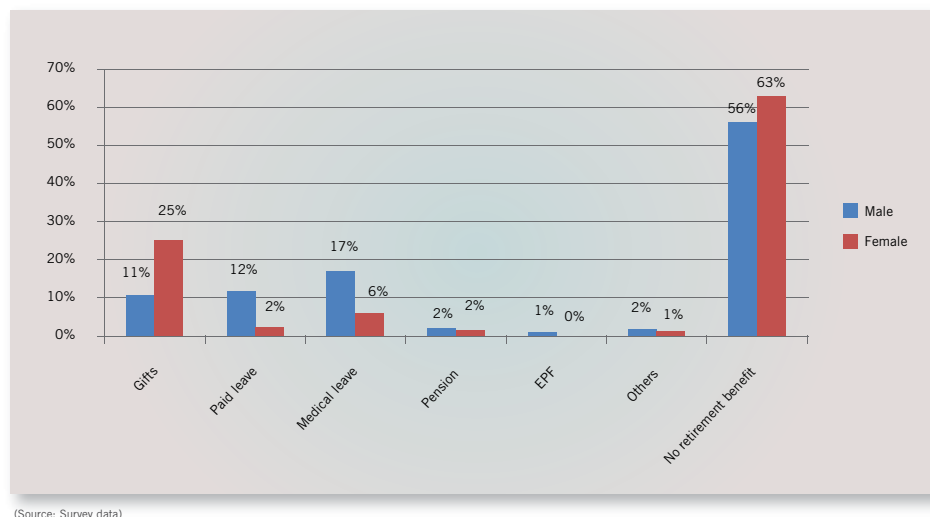
Table 6: Difficulties in working condition (multiple responses)

Reasons	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Forced to work longer than the agreed hours of work- with overtime allowances	27	7.65%	23	1.83%	50	3.11%
Forced to work more than the agreed hours of work- without overtime allowances	93	26.35%	268	21.32%	361	22.42%
Forced to work where there are potential health risks	18	5.10%	102	8.11%	120	7.45%
Victim of violence or threats of violence	20	5.67%	174	13.84%	194	12.05%
Forced to perform other activities than the agreed ones	69	19.55%	297	23.63%	366	22.73%
Forced to work for other employer than the agreed	21	5.95%	80	6.36%	101	6.27%
Forced to work in other location than the agreed	24	6.80%	110	8.75%	134	8.32%
Forced to stay longer than agreed with the employer	29	8.22%	77	6.13%	106	6.58%
Didn't pay salary according to the agreement	34	9.63%	83	6.60%	117	7.27%
Insufficient salary	7	1.98%	3	0.24%	10	0.62%
Didn't provide sufficient food	5	1.42%	20	1.59%	25	1.55%
Illness	3	0.85%	13	1.03%	16	0.99%
Other	3	0.85%	7	0.56%	10	0.62%
Total	353	100%	1257	100%	1610	100%

(Source: Survey data)

It is only around 40 per cent of the total sample who have had any form of retirement or end of contract benefits in the form of gifts, paid leave, medical leave, pension, Employee Provident Fund. As shown in Figure 35 the most popular form of retirement benefit among female migrant workers are gifts. Many males obtain more medical leave and paid leave than their female counterparts. Retirement benefits such as employee provident fund and pensions very uncommon.

Figure 35: Access and types of retirement benefits enjoyed by migrant workers



Apart from retirement benefits there are many instances where migrant workers are deprived of the salary that they are entitled to. 20 per cent of the males and females have experienced deprivation of salary. The nature and extent of salary deprivation is elaborated in Table 7.

Table 7: Extent and types of deprivation of salary (multiple responses)

Problems	Male	Female	Total
Didn't receive promised salary	28	103	131
Didn't receive a salary	8	42	50
Didn't receive salary properly	11	60	71
Insufficient salary for heavy workload	1	6	7
Didn't receive overtime allowance	5	5	10
Didn't receive total salary	26	72	98
Didn't pay full or part of salary as employee was sent to prison	15	2	17
Other	10	19	29

(Source: Survey data)

Not providing the salary that was originally promised is one of the major issues. Not getting the salary regularly is another major concern. As explained in Table 7, comparatively the reason more females have sent money irregularly to their homes than males can also be further explained. This again explains the bitter realities of a sizable proportion of migrant workers of Sri Lanka at an individual level.

There are some who go through hardships to find a placement in a foreign country. Some even pawn their valuables to finance some of the procedures of foreign employment. In fact 44 per cent of the respondents have obtained some sort of financial assistance (23 per cent from local lenders, 13 per cent through pawning of jewellery, lands or other valuables) to spend on preparatory work.

Once they go to the employer, they are at times abused in multiple ways and are sent home without any money which places them in a very vulnerable position with valuables pawned, without a job and back into the community, limiting their chances to make ends meet.

It is mostly the successful and more adaptable migrant workers who tend to migrate for a second and third time. 72 per cent of males and 78 per cent females (77 per cent of the total) have obtained their full salary expected during their first employment. In other words 23 per cent of the migrant workers have not received the full salary at least during one migration. By the fifth employment overseas, 100 per cent of males and 95 per cent of females have obtained their full wages. This shows that the trust with the employer and good working environment could be seen as important factors, encouraging workers to migrate more than once or twice to the same place or different places.

In spite of all the above issues, 60 per cent (61.5 per cent of female and 53 per cent of male) migrant workers believe that they have achieved their economic objectives. The reasons for not fulfilling economic objectives include mismanagement of the earnings and salary issues of the employer. If they are given a chance to migrate, 30 per cent (43 per cent of males and 26 per cent of females) are still prepared to migrate for employment.

Migrant workers return home due to various reasons (Figure 36). Most of them (61 per cent) return home after the completion of the contractually agreed period of employment. However, a significant proportion (24 per cent) return home due to various reasons including health concerns of the migrant worker or members of migrant's family, inadaptability, unbearable harassment and exploitation.

Kumari, a 38 year old female from Ratnapura: "At the time I left the country I was ill but the agency insisted that I go. I went to Kuwait five months ago. I had to work long hours and I was not even allowed to sleep for four hours. My illness got worse and I communicated with the agency in Kuwait and the agency placed me in a new house but I was not paid anything. As I protested, I was sent back to Sri Lanka. I am now thinking how I am going to settle the loans that I obtained to finance my administrative procedures prior to migration."

All other reasons including personal problems, inability to cope with stress, premature termination of contract by the employee or employer and reasons beyond anybody's control such as unsettled security situation in the destination country account for only 15 per cent of the reasons to return home.

Migrant workers, both male and female go overseas sometimes with considerable hardship with the intention of making ends meet and to see a better future for their children. Though the goal is realized to a certain extent, many factors are beyond their control and there are many migrant workers who are compelled to deviate from their core business of sending remittances for a specific reason and also face the risk of returning home prematurely without settling the debts, which in fact place such families in a more precarious situation in comparison to the pre-migration state.

Nuwan, a 28 year old male from Matara: "I went to Malaysia on a tourist visa and I worked as a labourer, initially for a nominal payment and then I got a well paid job, but was not able to get a working visa, which prevented me from staying longer. However, I was able to save money and return."

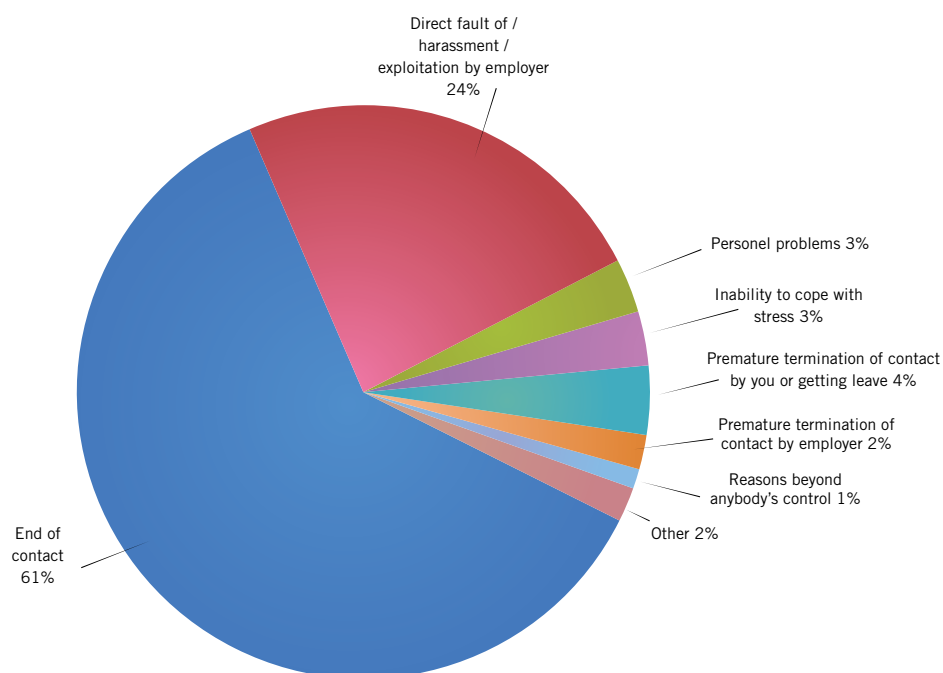


Figure 36: Reasons to return home (1st migration) (Source: Survey data)

Remedies to safeguard the interests of the migrant workers are clearly spelt out in the National Labour Migration Policy 2008 mainly under Annex II “International obligations to ensure migration in conditions of dignity, security and equity” and it’s implementation has to be monitored and to check for effectiveness.

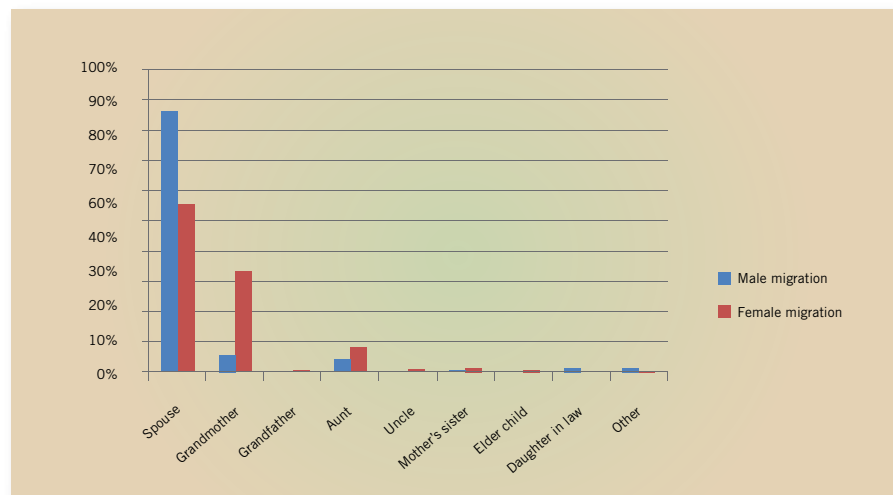
The responsibility to rehabilitate traumatised victims of human trafficking conceptually falls directly under the scope of reintegration of returnee migrant workers. Therefore a strategy should be developed to firstly provide care and support to those whom have fallen victim to human trafficking and exploitation and attend to their reintegration issues on a priority basis. It is also required to coordinate with law enforcement agencies at the local, national and international levels to mitigate the such incidents. However to do this, there seems to be no system of follow-up by the authorities to look in to the welfare, care and support of returnee migrant workers at a .

6.2. Child Protection

In the absence of the mother, the primary care giver, who has gone on foreign employment, child protection becomes a major area of concern. Children of migrant workers are often placed in a vulnerable situation without the primary caregiver’s responsibility being undertaken by anyone. Foreseeing the situation, the primary care giving responsibility is generally given to a reliable female family member in cases where the mother migrates overseas for employment.

As shown in Figure 37, during father migration 86 per cent of the spouses are given the responsibility of caring for the children whereas it is only 55 per cent of husbands who take the responsibility of caring for their children during the migration of their mother. Grandmothers are preferred over grandfathers and aunts are preferred over uncles to take up the primary care giving responsibility.

Figure 37: Taking up the responsibility of primary caregiver of children (Source: Survey data)



As explained in Figure 38, 96 per cent of migrant workers are satisfied with the way that their children have been cared for. Out of the 96 per cent who have said that they are satisfied about the way their children have been cared for, only 51 per cent have mentioned that they are highly satisfied whereas 45 per cent have said that they are not highly satisfied but generally satisfied. This could mean that the children have not been looked after by the guardian to the extent that the primary caregiver.

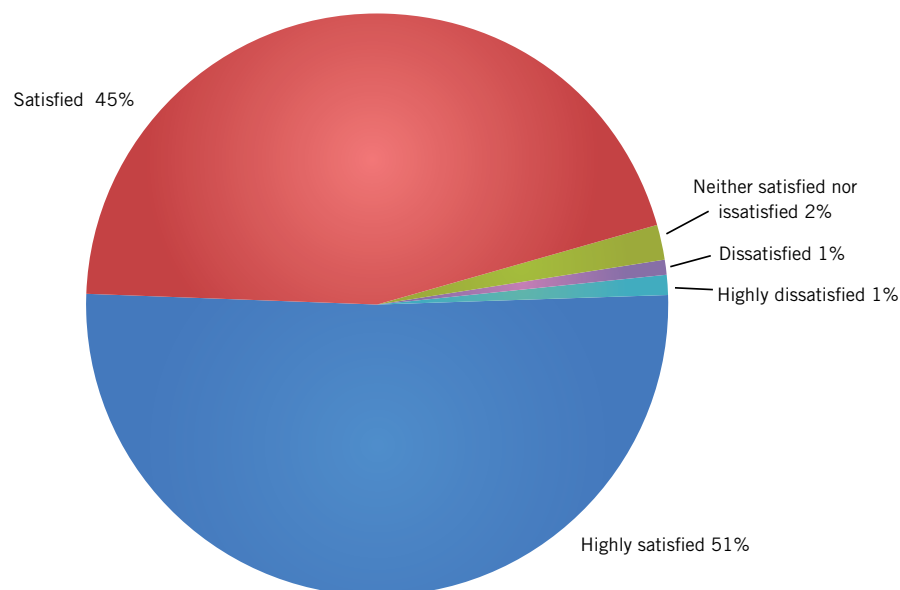


Figure 38: Satisfaction with primary caregiver (Source: Survey data)

In the case of male migrant workers it is mostly the mother of the children who continues to care for the children. In the case of the mother migrating, it is mostly the father who takes responsibility for the children, but is less aware or more prone to deviate from the responsibility of parenting children. It is seen that the children who have been neglected by such fathers have faced difficulties. 9 per cent of all fathers and mothers have mentioned that their children have faced problems while they were away on foreign employment. Many such children are likely to develop psychological and other developmental problems.

32 per cent of the issues such as direct negligence, getting exposed to accidents, teenage marriages, lack of emotional support were due to negligence by the alternative primary caregiver. 20 per cent of the problems

are due to illnesses of children which could also include up to a certain extent, negligence. 12 per cent of the problems categorized as weak performance in school could be a direct consequence of negligence.

“Udeshi, a 34 year old female from Galle: While I was experiencing an appalling situation in Kuwait, I was not able to communicate well with my children. My daughter who is 14 had started an affair with a neighbour and had completely neglected her education. Even after I returned she did not care about what I told her and I do not have any control over her. If my husband had exercised some control over her, this would not have happened. He is just not bothered about anything”

While neglect is seen as a major issue in child protection, a child getting abused (5 per cent of all issues faced by children of migrant parents) is another serious secondary issue due to the lack of parental care and attention according to data. In cases where the primary care giving of the mother is replaced by the father, there have been instances where children have got abused, physically, sexually and psychologically mainly by close relatives or even by the father himself.

Violence experienced by children as a consequence of a parent migrating is also observed (10 per cent of all issues faced by children of migrant parents). The main root cause for most conflicts are the lack of resources, alcoholism or intimate partner centric violence.

Even though there are many cases of neglect of children, there are also experiences of how migration for employment has influenced positive development in children, their education and their future.

Kamala, a 48 year old female from Kalutara: “I was away from home on three occasions and I believe that it is a good avenue to gain employment and provides a good income. Therefore I encouraged my daughter too to go for foreign employment. She is now doing her second job overseas at a hotel in Kuwait. She is now looking for avenues to get her sister also into the same workplace”

There is no effective counselling support available for children to cope with any chronic psychological trauma they could experience during the absence of a migrant parent. Even after returning home, mainly in the cases of mother migration there are issues in relation to effective and speedy reintegration with children. This situation could place children as well as the returnee in a dilemma. Along with other social and economic issues that the returnee migrant workers face, inability to properly reintegrate with children could potentially induce remigration.

6.3. Relationship with Spouse

There are many relationship issues with the spouse that arise during migration which are a cause of chronic family problems. They become serious matters when such incidents result in legal separation and divorce having a substantial negative impact on the children's psychology and well-being.

88 per cent and 95 per cent of the female and male migrant workers respectively (90 per cent of the total) have maintained contact with families while they were employed overseas. Although a relatively high percentage confirm that they have maintained contact with family while overseas, there are many instances where the partners in Sri Lanka are told by neighbours that it is customary for female migrant workers to have sexual relationship with the employers. This leads to the trust between the migrant and the spouse being broken. In the case of migrant workers who are unable to keep frequent contact with the family due to the disallowance of communication by the employer, such statements by community members may further induce deterioration of understanding and trust.

Fathima, a 27 year old female from Batticalloa: “I found out that my husband had started an affair with another woman in the area and he is maintaining another family with my earnings. I had to find employment again in order to maintain the cash flow to sustain my family”

In the case of a migrant spouse, there have been instances where the partner in Sri Lanka find alternative partners often from the neighbourhood. Such scenarios could easily lead to increased demand for commercial

sex workers in such areas given the socio economic context of most of the areas with dense migrant worker populations. As seen in the example above, replaced intimate partners are most often from the neighbourhood and the men whose spouses are migrant workers attract women with resource constraints.

6 per cent (4 per cent of male and 7 per cent female) of migrant workers experienced problems with the spouse while they were engaged in foreign employment. Males were less vocal about the issues whereas the females were more vociferous about their concerns during interviews. The issue that concerned the male migrant worker was the stopping of any physical and emotional relationship with the migrant worker by the wife (16 per cent of all issues). Most of the issues that the female migrant workers experienced were related to liquor addiction of husband (27 per cent of all issues), husband having extra marital affairs (16 per cent of all issues), wasting money by the husband (5 per cent of all issues), husband disagreeing with the migration (4 per cent of all issues), husband marrying someone else (6 per cent of all issues). Due to the above situations these families have less unity and migrant workers continue to send cash for the sake of their children but the children do not always benefit from such cash transfers.

There are women who migrate for a second time relatively soon after they return from overseas, mainly to avoid disturbing situations within the household. There are occasions where abusive situations off-shore are seen as a blessing to avoid abuse by an alcoholic husband and the plethora of social and economic problems at home and the home environment.

Although it would be desirable to have trained social workers as counselors to visit families experiencing such issues, it would be more realistic to look at the potential of using the formal and informal structures such as religious institutions and CBOs that could coordinate between family units and the government structures. Given the fact that only a minority of migrant families face various social and psychological issues, creating a support structure at the local level to help these families is certainly not beyond the capacity of the state and other institutions.



7 Opportunities and Challenges for Sustainable Reintegration

7.1. Economic Reintegration

Economic need is the main and foremost factor that leads to migration for employment. There are many who feel that they have achieved what they wanted through foreign employment. There is also a proportion of failures from various aspects that were discussed in the previous sections. Considering the current situation that the returnee migrant workers are in, it is interesting to find out how their economic reintegration has taken place.

Even though many decide to return to Sri Lanka or are compelled to return, most (79 per cent) do not plan what they will do and how they will be economically active upon return. It is mostly female (86 per cent) returnees who are indecisive about what they would do for a living upon return which could leave them in a vulnerable position in terms of social and economic reintegration. 57 per cent of the males are relatively certain or at least plan what their economic activity would be upon their return.

Kumara, a 33 year old male from Gampaha: “Before leaving for foreign employment I was a tile layer. I was able to acquire new skills like using precision tools for fine craftsmanship. Because of the quality of my work I get enough contracts and I am earning twice as much as I used to earn before I left. I also put out on hire a three wheeler which brings in an income when I am not undertaking a tile laying contract.”

It is only 14 per cent (23 per cent of males and 7 per cent of females) who use skills they have acquired during overseas employment in their current jobs. Most of the employed (28 per cent of males and 66 per cent of females) remain in elementary occupations while generally engaging in unskilled work. The returnee females lack diverse job opportunities, hence they are compelled to engage in day wage labour work which again places them in a vulnerable situation that could also lead to re-migration instead of seeking quality reintegration. Engagement of males in the job market is in diverse areas including service and sales (23 per cent), crafts related trades work (10 per cent), agriculture /fisheries (7 per cent).

As presented in Figure 39, most of the employed have started engaging in employment within the first six months (70 per cent) after returning. It is an extremely good sign to see that the returnee migrant workers become economically active relatively quickly. 20 per cent here become economically active between seven and twelve months. Negligible gender based difference can be seen in terms of economic activity and the lag time spent on finding a job. However, the quality of job openings, payment scales and underemployment still remain a matter for concern for many who are currently employed. Nearly 10 per cent of the returnees having to wait for over one year to get employed. The lay of opportunities after returning can be considered a serious concern that may induce remigration. This again could explain the lack of semi skilled employment opportunities locally. Discussion should take into consideration the history of acquired skills and the levels of education of the returnee migrant workers prior to defining the areas for development of the returnee migrant workers.

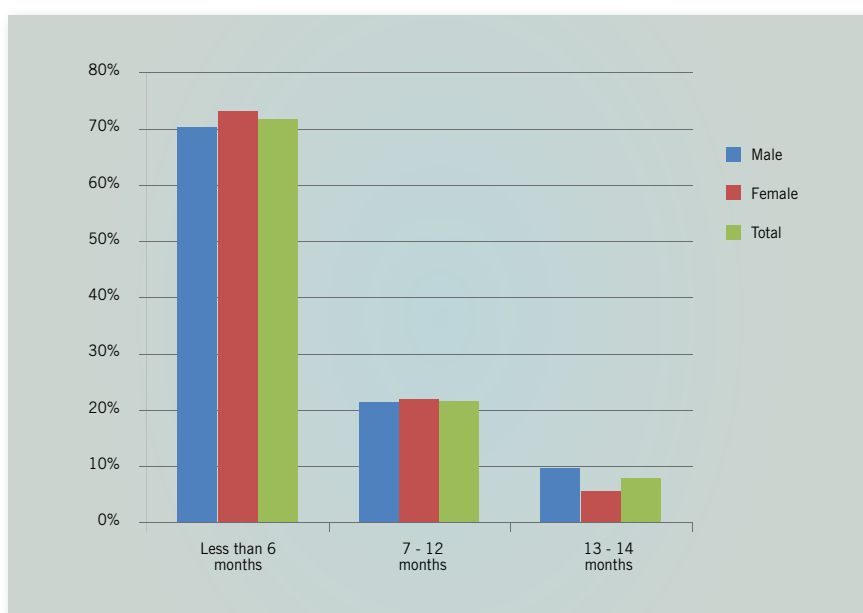


Figure 39: Duration spent to find a job (See map 8) (Source: Survey data)

Economic reintegration was discussed on the basis of how the returnee migrant workers have been able to be employed and be economically active upon return. There is a need to discuss further the economic activity and how well the returnee migrant workers are to be utilized for national development along with their skills they have acquired while working and getting training from destination countries. The regional Rataviruwo organisations could enhance the skill utilization of returnee migrant workers for national development in a meaningful way through career guidance, providing training, financial networking, providing micro financing facilities and educating on financial management.

7.1.1. Opportunities and challenges for economic reintegration

There are many opportunities and challenges for effective economic reintegration of returnee migrant workers. Given the economic background most of the migrant workers come from, characterized with mortgages and loans to recover, returnee migrant workers, even the ones who have successfully saved during overseas employment are compelled to find employment soon after returning in order to maintain the economic status of the family. Maintaining cash flow at the family level is essential to prevent most families from going back to the debt crisis that haunted them before.

There seems to be a difference between the skill requirement in the Sri Lankan job market and the skills that the returnee migrant workers possess. The relative inability of female migrant workers to find employment could be due to the gender difference between the job responsibilities, skill levels required and the general gender centric disparity of wage scales in the Sri Lankan job market. The rate of economic re-engagement and the availability of economic avenues are two positive trends, but the gender based disparity of pay scales is a major push factor resulting in re-migration.

However in the Sri Lankan job market they are better accommodated by the legal and law enforcement frameworks and are less prone to abuse by employers although less paid, a pull factor that retains Sri Lankan labour to fill local labour demand.

When considering the level of satisfaction as shown in Figure 40 about the working environment of returnee migrant workers, it is seen that a majority of the returnees are satisfied.

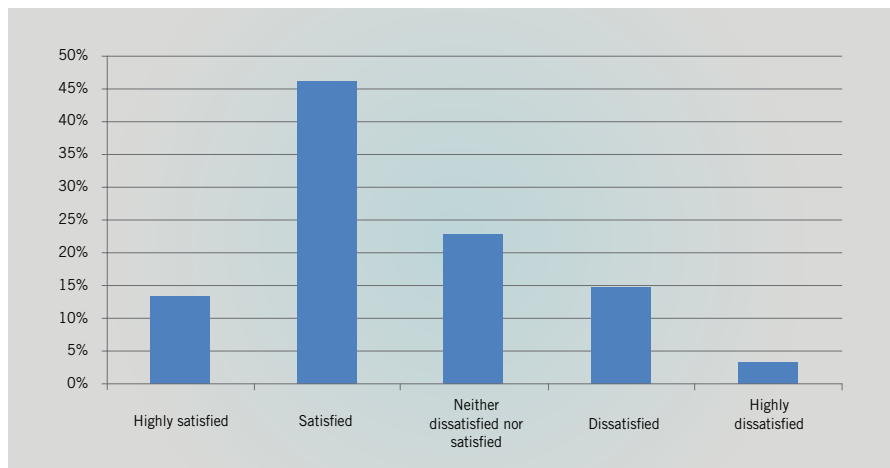


Figure 40: Satisfaction about working environment (Source: Survey data)

However, as described earlier, it is the dissatisfied 18 per cent of the returnee migrant workers who are more likely to look for alternative employment opportunities in Sri Lanka or overseas.

During foreign employment it is seen that there is a significant difference between male and female migrant workers. The men who were more used to engaging in economic activities are compelled to play the role of the caretaker of household affairs that they are not used to. However, in the case of male migrant workers, the role of the breadwinner remains still and the maintenance of household affairs continues to revolve around the females as it used to be.

For effective utilisation of the skills obtained overseas for economic activities in Sri Lanka, there should be a market for services such as housemaids, in the case of women. Although the women in particular in the peripheries lack access to markets, the urban returnees have more opportunities to cater to the urban middle class with their professionally enhanced skills. In the case of males who mostly engage in semi skilled jobs overseas, they have more opportunities in the widespread construction industry and service sector. The Rataviruwo organisations acting as a hub to link service needs with quality assurance and personnel provision could enhance the follow up services that seem lagging at present.

7.2. Social Reintegration

Social reintegration will be looked at from two points of view, namely reintegration within the family structure and reintegration within the community structure. The section will provide an analysis of the level of satisfaction and confidence of returnee migrant workers on different key social indicators.

7.2.1. Reintegration within the family structure

Although the processes relevant to reintegration begin from the day the decision was taken to leave the country, the more significant aspect of social reintegration starts with the return home. Generally it is the immediate family members that 'pull' the migrant back to Sri Lanka. The decision to return home and the economic reintegration process are discussed mainly with immediate family members, extended family members and friends prior to return by 22 per cent (44 per cent males and 15 per cent females).

Anusha, a 41 year old female from Kurunegala: "All family members agreed when I said I am going for foreign employment. I was eager to come back and so were my family members."

Once the decision is made to return, the reintegration process begins and only a mere 2 per cent of the migrant workers have acknowledged that they encountered problems with the family members including spouse, children and extended family within the reintegration process which suggests strong resilience. However, 5 per cent of the female migrant workers who have returned have encountered problems with their spouse upon return which is significant given the large proportion of female migrant population. Furthermore given that the survey allows only a limited time to extract data from respondents, a certain proportion of respondents who experienced family issues upon their return may have refrained from expressing the actual situation, due to limited trust established between them and the surveyor.

Even though it is a relatively small percentage that had encountered problems with family members, settling down with family members has taken a longer time which involved a fair amount of mutual understanding, acceptance of what is on offer and the understanding of realities which consumes time. 17 per cent of the returnees (14 per cent of males and 18 per cent of females) were not able to reconcile with the spouse effectively. 12 per cent of the returnees (18 per cent males and 11 per cent females) were not been able to reconcile with their children. 9 per cent of the returnees (11 per cent males and 8 per cent females) were not able to settle down with the extended family members.

Although there have been issues related to effective reintegration of migrant workers with the family setting, it is only 3 per cent of the returnees (4 per cent of the males and 2 per cent of females) who sought any external support to cope with the situation. This could be on one hand due to the lack of reliable professional support services, mainly in the peripheries and on the other hand the lack of time and conducive cultural setting that would encourage them obtain to professional services to address family issues.

As indicated in Table 8, a majority of the migrant workers mentioned they have not experienced deterioration in most aspects of children's behaviour. However, family economic situation and family business situations had deteriorated slightly (15 per cent and 8 per cent respectively) according to the perspective of the returnee migrant workers. It should also be noted that these measures are largely subjective and indicate broad trends.

Table 8: Changes observed in social, economic and psychological conditions

Indicator	Improved	No change	Deteriorated
Health condition of children	41.68%	55.88%	2.43%
Psychological status of children	57.92%	39.38%	2.70%
Nutrition of children	44.05%	53.58%	2.37%
Education of children	45.14%	51.39%	3.47%
Psychological status of the spouse	53.90%	42.50%	3.60%
Psychological status of extended family	46.12%	51.56%	2.32%
Family economic situation	22.48%	62.19%	15.33%
Family businesses	37.06%	55.33%	7.61%

(Source: Survey data)

When considering the level of satisfaction among the family members and extended family members on the contribution of the migrant worker to the economic wellbeing of the family, there are not many significant differences between male and female respondents.

The satisfaction levels represent the perspective of the migrant worker on what the migrant worker thinks about family members and extended family members think about the economic contribution than the capturing of actual thoughts of the family members and extended family members.

Figure 41 elaborates how the members of the family recognize the contribution made by the migrant worker from the point of view of the migrant. Migrant workers generally think that their economic contribution at the family level is appreciated by the family and extended family members. It is apparent that the general trend is for the families to be satisfied about the contribution by the migrant worker. While 28 per cent of the families are highly satisfied, 44 per cent of the families are not satisfied, but are generally satisfied. The combined satisfied and highly satisfied in terms of gender variation (69 per cent of families of male migrant workers and 71 per cent of families of female migrant workers) do not show substantial differences.

However, when it comes to dissatisfaction of family members about the migration for employment, it is seen that families of male migrant workers are more dissatisfied (15 per cent of families of migrant workers) than the families of female (6 per cent of families of returnee migrant workers) migrant workers. However it should be reiterated that the figure was generated based on the answers provided by the returnee migrant workers and not the members of the family of the returnee.

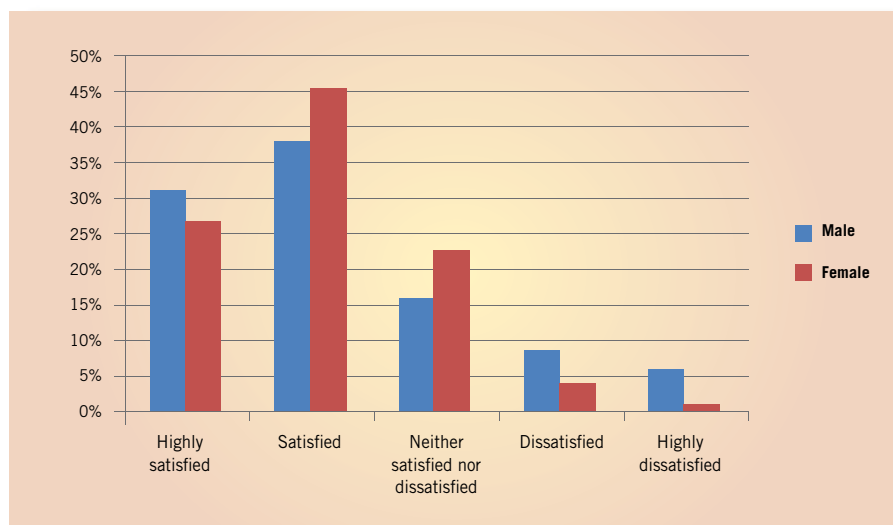


Figure 41: Family members' satisfaction regarding the migrants' contribution to the family economy
(Source: Survey data)

About 1/5 of the sample believe that the contribution of the migrant worker neither pleases nor displeases the family members.

Kamala, a 48 year old female from Kalutara: "All my family members were happy to see me back. I was well received by them and most of the problems that were there before my migration have been solved. This is why I thought of sending my daughter also for foreign employment"

It is mostly the recent returnees who believe their family members are satisfied or dissatisfied about their contribution. With time, family members become neither satisfied nor dissatisfied after the returning of the migrant, irrespective of the contribution they made.

Apart from the satisfaction level of family members detected by the returnee, the satisfaction of returnees on the family members too needs to be looked at. In fact most of the experiences suggest that there is hardly any change in the family context that changes along with the migration and return.

Thanuja, a 44 year old female from Kegalle: "I was expecting many things to change after I returned, but nothing has changed. My husband is in fact consuming more alcohol than he used to. And the children are not able to keep their head high."

Fathima, a 27 year old female from Batticalloa: "I lost everything because of foreign employment. I was under-paid and after I returned it was even worse."

As shown in Figure 42, migrants are generally satisfied about the level of acknowledgement by respective extended family members on the contribution to the family economy by the returned migrant worker.

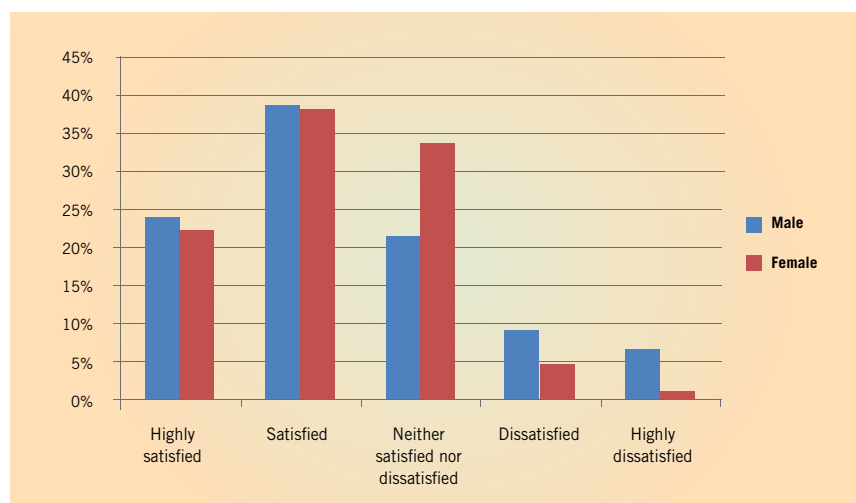


Figure 42: Extended family members' satisfaction on migrants' contribution to the family economy
(Source: Survey data)

Udeshi, a 34 year old female from Galle: "I got the attention and recognition soon after I came back, but now after the gifts were given they (extended family members) are no longer there"

During the FGDs it was mentioned that it is common to see the extended family members including aunts, uncles, cousins and grand parents become very close upon arrival and once the gifts are given, they will not be concerned. If there are no gifts, the extended family members easily detach, themselves. The general idea that came up during FGDs was that the level of satisfaction of the extended family depended on the amount of investment on gifts, which is an important reflection of the expectation of family members.

7.2.2. Reintegrating with the Community

Social reintegration is as important as reintegrating with the family context. Therefore various dimensions of association with the community of the returnee migrant workers and the corresponding families were studied. Nature and alteration of the association with the neighbourhood is one of the key determinants that reflect the nature and willingness for association with the community. In that regard it is seen that 17 per cent (10.4 per cent of male and 8.7 per cent of female) of the returnee migrant workers had changed their residence upon return. However, it is mostly within the same setting that the returnee migrant workers have changed their residence. As explained in the 'Demographic and Social Profile' Chapter (Chapter 5), changing houses shows trends largely determined by regional and national environmental and socio-political factors.

"Nuwan, a 28 year old male from Matara: I was a heroin addict before I left. My first aim in foreign employment was to overcome that. I am no longer into drugs, but I am considering moving out of the community at least to Colombo as I want to avoid associating with my old friends who still take drugs. My parents too are encouraging me to move out of the community"

"Kumari, a 38 year old female from Ratnapura: I continued to wear the clothes that I used while I was in Kuwait as I did not have many other clothes. The people in the neighbourhood interpreted it in a different way and were saying that I have acquired the Arabic culture"

It was also confirmed through Figures 43 that showed how the returnees see their neighbours recognizing their contribution to the national economy. It is less than 20 per cent of the neighbours that have felt (according to the migrant) dissatisfied about the national contribution of the migrant workers.

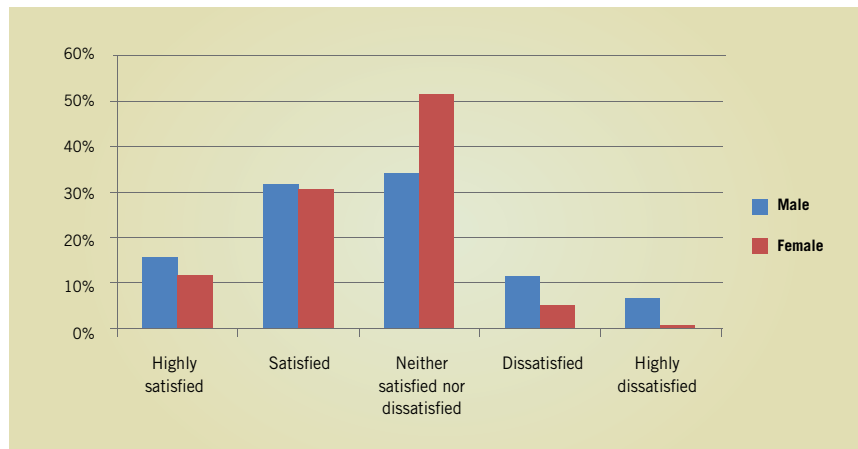


Figure 43: Community members' satisfaction on contribution of migrant workers to the national economy
(Source: Survey data)

However it is important to note that returnees believe their contribution is neither recognised nor under estimated by members of the community, indicating that a majority of the returnees do not see them being treated any differently when compared with the pre migration situation.

The above argument is further reiterated in Figure 44 which depicts the level of reintegration with the relations, neighbours and association with community organisations. When respondents were asked whether they effectively associate with relations, neighbours and community organisations, association with relations and neighbourhood activities has been realised among 96 per cent-97 per cent while participation in community organisations was less than 10 per cent.

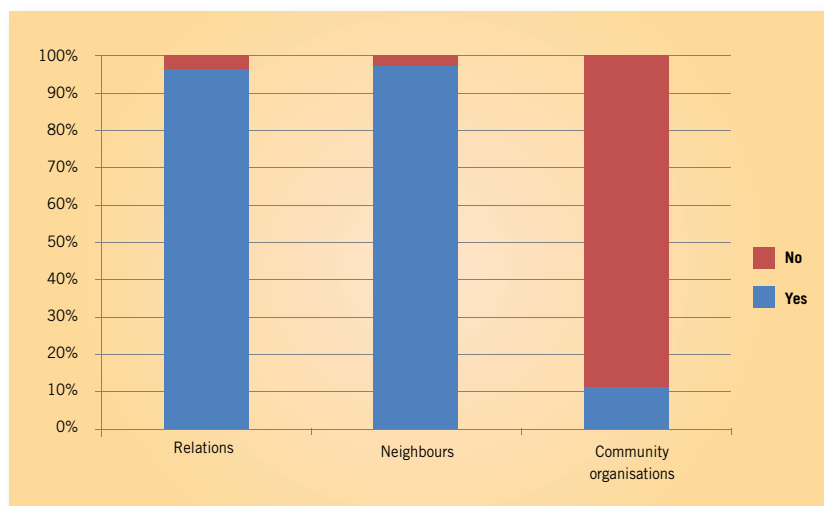


Figure 44: Association with relations, neighbours and community

“Kumara, a 33 year old male from Gampaha: Before I left for foreign employment, I used to do artworks needed during festivals and events. After I returned I continued engaging in such activities proactively.”

These satisfaction levels not only reflect the satisfaction of the family members, but also the confidence level that the returnee migrant has on the immediate family and the extended family, hence partly translating the extent and effectiveness of reintegration into the family unit.

7.2.3. Opportunities and challenges for social reintegration

In general there are no insurmountable constraints that impede the process of social reintegration of returnee migrant workers. The phenomenon of resilience can be better understood when the socioeconomic background that a majority of migrant workers represent is explored deeper.

Though the returnee migrant workers do not seem to have significant issues with neighbours and relations, their formation of partnerships or participating in community organizations is significantly low. This in turn makes the process of social reintegration slower. On the other hand, children and vulnerable members of families represented by returnee migrant workers too should be taken into consideration when looking at challenges for effective reintegration. As is well known, social networks help disadvantaged people to establish useful contacts with relevant persons and institutions.

The Involvement of the SLBFE and other stakeholders in the migration process do not seem to interact at the family level. The Rataviruwo programme's intervention at the family level to provide counselling, mediate where necessary and provide advice relevant to social reintegration in the pre departure, migrant and reintegration phases of the migration process could smooth effective social reintegration and hence strengthened accordingly.

8 Roles and Effectiveness of Stakeholders

Many state and non state stakeholders appear throughout the process from informing about migration opportunities to preparation to migrate to during of overseas stay to the returning process. There are many local and foreign stakeholders operating in different capacities that are involved in mobilization, recruitment, training, transporting, employing, paying, issue resolving and aiding reintegration upon return. Such stakeholders can be community based organisations to government and intergovernmental entities that act at different levels.

This Chapter intends to bring forward the nature and effectiveness of roles played by different stakeholders at different levels.

8.1. Foreign Employment Agents and Sub-Agents

Mobilization of migrant workers is done mainly by the sub - agents operating at the village or local level. They operate as middlemen or brokers linking the prospective migrant workers with the agencies based in cities.

Apart from sub agents, media advertisements and using community based structures to induce prospective migrant workers to enter the process of migration for overseas employment and informal networks also encourage people to migrate for employment (Figure 45).

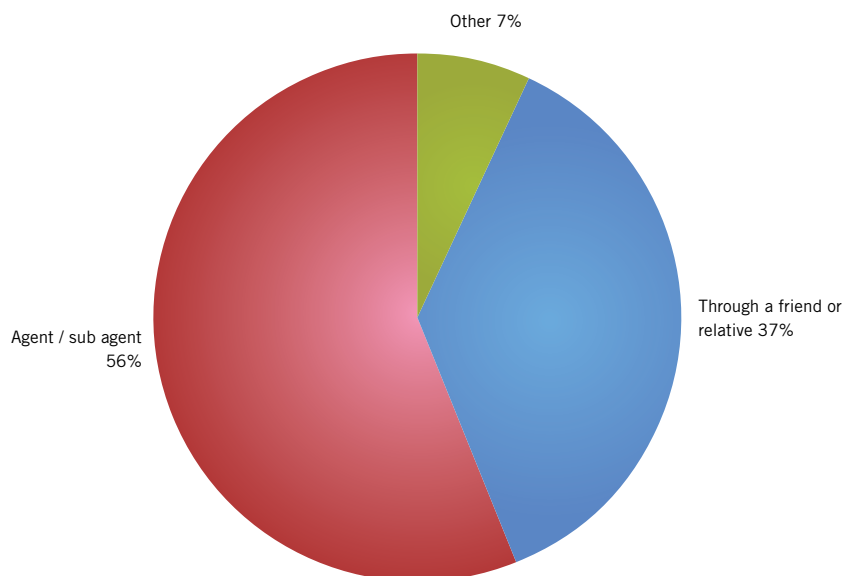


Figure 45: Modes of mobilization of prospective migrant workers (Source: Survey data)

Prospective migrant workers are informed about the process of foreign employment in three main ways. It is done mainly (56 per cent) by foreign employment agencies, an authorized branch of a foreign employment agency or an unauthorized sub agent. Friends and relatives (37 per cent) too inform them about foreign employment avenues. The other 7 per cent includes newspaper advertisements, electronic media advertisements and posters (Figure 45).

The recruitment of migrant workers is done through a foreign employment agency between the prospective overseas client and the foreign employment agency in the destination country.

Figure 46 shows that the sub agents and the agents are in fact the most active stakeholders that engage closely with the migrant worker in order to get certain pre migration services done.

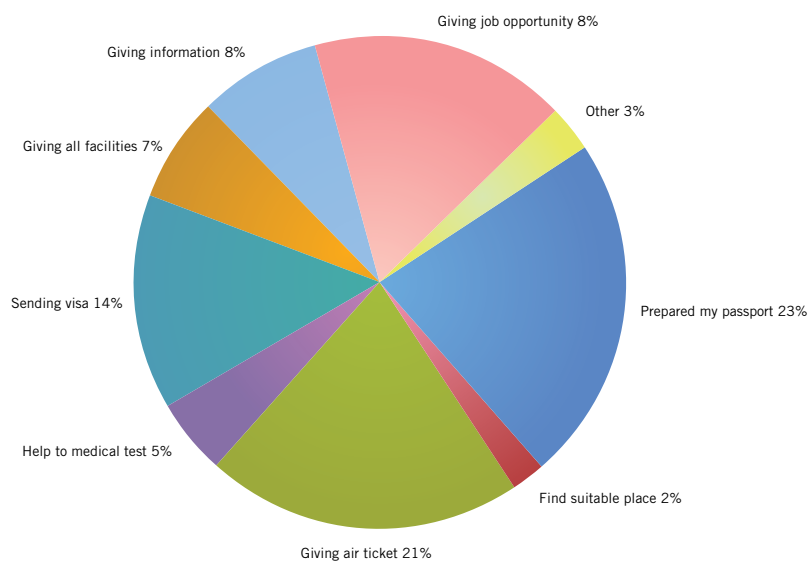


Figure 46: Responsibilities undertaken by the subagents/third party

Even though it is not permitted by law to charge migrant workers for services provided by agencies or sub-agencies that process is still taking place. 33 per cent of the migrant workers have paid in the following manner to the sub agents of agents in order to obtain services related to overseas employment. While some have paid knowingly there have been many who have not known whether or not they are being cheated by the agent or sub agent.

Since the sample was selected for the study from among migrant workers who returned within the last two years, the implementation of the new legal provisions on the fees charged and other laws pertaining to foreign employment would not have applied to most of the respondents as they had migrated over three years ago, but it was less than SLR 15,000 which was charged on most occasions (35 per cent out of the 33 per cent). However, there have been occasions when migrant workers have been charged as much as SLR 50,000-100,000 or more as official charges although the foreign employment agencies are not entitled to charge prospective migrant workers.

The foreign employment agencies in the receiving country are another important stakeholder that deals directly with the employer and the migrant worker after they enter the destination country. As expressed by the returnees on interviews, it is evident that there are many manipulations in the process forced by the agencies based overseas. Some of the grievances about the activities of the agencies in receiving countries include:

1. Ignorance of the employee concerns pertaining to payment issues, forced labour, sexual exploitation
2. Following an employer friendly policy. i.e If a migrant worker runs away from an employer and approaches the overseas agency, the employers are informed about the problem and in certain cases, they are handed back to the same employer regardless of the factors that led to them running away.
3. Inducing forced labour, sexual exploitation and non - payment of wages.
4. Where there are Sri Lankan employers working in the overseas agency, it is even more dangerous as they tend to take advantage of mostly the female workers.

5. Migrant workers get beaten up, verbally abused, insulted, and abused by men attached to agencies when expressing their concerns.
6. If a migrant worker is compelled to leave the first employer, they are placed with another employer without any contract being signed and without any guarantee of wage.
7. There are many occasions in cases where contracts are terminated prematurely; the migrant workers are forced to work free of charge or for a lower wage for alternate employers.

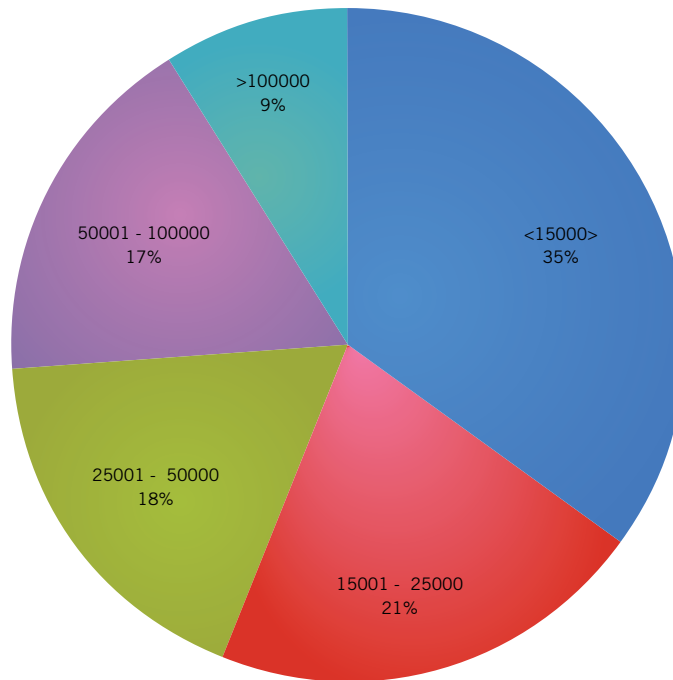


Figure 47: Scale of fees charged by agencies and sub agents. (Source: Survey data)

In spite of many accusations foreign employment agencies continue to play a significant and essential role that the State does not have the capacity to handle through SLBFE. However, the role of the sub agent seems to cease after the migrant takes the flight to go to the destination country. In the case of the foreign employment agencies, their role lasts for a longer duration, probably till the migrant returns, as they have a legal binding with the State and the migrant. They are also supposed to play a key role in ensuring that the rights of migrant workers are not violated, but are blamed by many for failing to do so. The agency in the receiving country too has a legal binding with the State, but is more often than not accused for not attending to their responsibilities as they are supposed to. In which ever case, migrant workers do not see foreign employment agencies or their allies as having a role to play when it comes to reintegration of returnee migrant workers

8.2. Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment

The Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment is the government entity established to safeguard the rights and to ensure the smooth passage of migrant workers. Its functions as seen by the returnee migrant workers are as explained in Figure 48.

More males than females consider the registration and providing information through the SLBFE as important aspects while females believe the most important service provided through SLBFE is giving training, financial assistance and insurance schemes. Signing agreements, dealing with the foreign employment agency in Sri Lanka and overseas and dealing with visa requirements are seen as important activities by both males (12 per cent) and females (88 per cent).

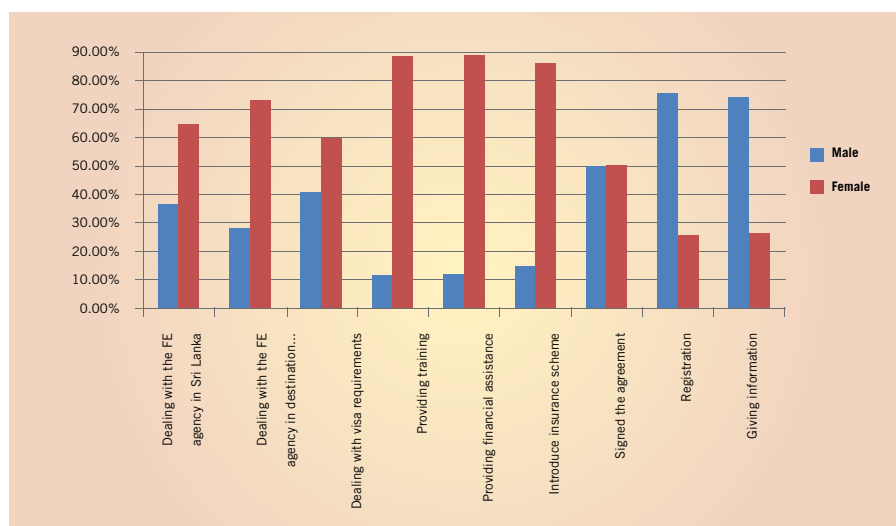


Figure 48: Services provided through the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (Source: Survey data)

After returning to Sri Lanka upon completion of work overseas or prematurely returning home due to various reasons described earlier, the returnee migrant workers do not have much engagement with the SLBFE. 97 per cent of the returnees do not have any interactions with the SLBFE at the regional or national level once they return.

Along with the establishment of “Rataviruwo” Programme of the government and subsequent recruitment of over 1080 graduates to be placed at the Divisional Secretariat Division level, it is anticipated that the SLBFE and the state in general would be more equipped to address the concerns of returnee migrant workers.

The Rataviruwo programme was established to ensure the socio-economic advancement of Migrant workers and their family members by forming a nation wide network of the migrant community called the “Rataviruwo” Organization. Through the institution, it is expected to

- Enhance the information base on the international labour migration industry
- Promote migrant workers to send remittances using formal channels with the monitoring of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka
- Enhancing financial undertaking of migrant workers to better equip them for financial management
- Provide assistance for migrant workers to build homes
- Provide financial services for migrants and returnees
- Provide vocational training avenues for youth
- Provide counselling and career guidance
- Provide legal support
- Enhance reintegration
- Promote safe and skilled migration prospects
- Enhance the health and safety aspects of families of migrant workers
- Interact at family level to resolve family issues of migrant workers
- Protect children of migrant workers left behind
- Enhance service provision through SLBFE

8.3. Embassies & Consular Services of Sri Lanka

Diplomatic Missions in the destination countries play a vital role in safeguarding the interests of the Sri Lankan nationals in the destination countries.

Obtaining certain services through the Sri Lankan Embassies in destination countries such as passport renewal, obtaining birth certificates and driver's license, organizing national festivals and events, have been good experiences. Some of the areas that they need to improve on are providing safe house facilities, transferring to another house, intervening with the employers to safeguard salary issues of migrant workers, provision of return facilities. While some embassies and consular departments of Sri Lankan missions have been commended some of the other Foreign Service entities have proved ineffective.

Even though embassies and consular services are expected to provide a number of services, considering the fact that many migrant workers face difficult situations in the destination countries, only 12 per cent resort to seeking assistance from the Consular Services or embassies. This could also be a reflection of the extent of confidence that the Consular Services have gained through providing services to the citizens of Sri Lanka working overseas. However, out of the ones that have obtained services from Embassies, the general trend seems to be good and the overall effectiveness on the actions of the Embassies has been good according to Figure 49.

Again, the level of effectiveness is dependent on the nature of service obtained. For example passport renewal, providing return facilities and providing safe house facilities seem relatively effective whereas intervening in salary related issues of migrant workers shows general ineffectiveness. It could be demonstrative of the limited interaction with the relevant stakeholders in host countries, lack of bargaining power when operating within the host countries or diplomatic biases. In which ever case, the Embassies and consular services are constitutionally bound to serve the citizens of Sri Lanka in receiving countries.

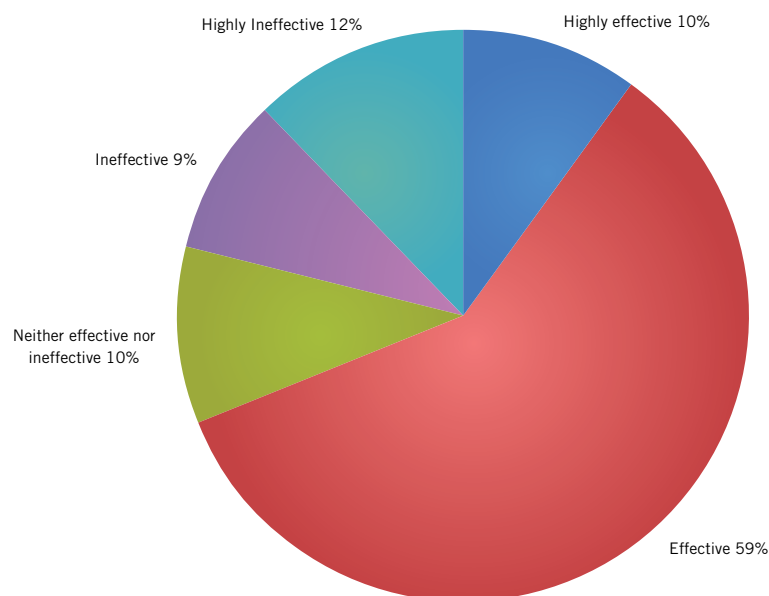


Figure 49: Effectiveness of the services provided through Sri Lankan embassies consular offices (Source: Survey data)

Upon return there is no organization or structure responsible to aid the migrant workers reintegrate effectively back to the family, social and cultural setting as well as economic settings. In fact, all the services provided by the State and private agencies are mostly confined to pre migration and in-service requirements and there is little attention to issues of return and reintegration, both economically and socially. This study clearly shows the need for a range of services to be made available to the returnee migrant workers.



9 Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1. Conclusions

An increasing number of Sri Lankan migrant workers have been seeking foreign employment as a source of income and a way of improving their socioeconomic status. The exodus began in the late 1970s and coincided with the introduction of liberal economic policies in 1977. The incomes earned by workers employed overseas have always been much higher than what they could earn in Sri Lanka. This has been particularly so for unskilled and semiskilled workers who have constituted the largest segment of the Sri Lankan migrant workers.

Despite the wages in Sri Lanka rising over the years, the gap between local and overseas wages has remained wide encouraging more and more people to look for overseas employment. Real incomes have not risen in keeping with the increased cost of living. Migration for labour has been a cyclical phenomenon. While those who have been employed overseas for a number of years return to Sri Lanka many more people leave the country creating a circular movement of people between Sri Lanka and destination countries. A certain proportion of migrant workers resort to repeat migration while some workers stay in Sri Lanka once they return from overseas employment.

Demographic aspects of overseas migration of Sri Lankan migrant workers has been quite significant. While most of the workers belong to the young and middle aged categories, female migrants have constituted even a more significant group than male migrants. Age and gender profile has not changed substantially over the years though male migration has increased in recent years at least partly due to the emergence of employment opportunities for unskilled male workers in the South East Asian countries.

A majority of migrant workers return to Sri Lanka when they are still at an age where they could engage in productive economic activities. Moreover most of the returnee migrant workers have not accumulated savings or assets that can ensure their future sustenance and wellbeing this is partly due to the fact that they have used their earnings to support their families in Sri Lanka. In other words, finding employment or any other sustainable source of income is a necessity for many returned migrants.

Sri Lankan State Policy on labour migration has been supportive of migration. Various State interventions have assisted many migrants to engage in overseas employment and send remittances back to Sri Lanka to support the families left behind. Yet there are no coordinated State organizations to facilitate reintegration of returnee migrant workers. This is a major lacuna that leaves returnee migrant workers in a vulnerable situation, compelling them to resort to their own devices. Given the fact that the returnee migrant workers contribute significantly to Sri Lanka's the human resource base, a carefully designed reintegration strategy can not only assist returnee migrant workers to settle down in their own communities but also enable the country to make the best use of a valuable human resource for the development of the country. This is particularly so given the fact that the workers employed abroad often acquire new skills and experiences that can be useful for local enterprises. What is also noteworthy is that the returnee migrant workers remain highly unorganized and cannot be effectively mobilized for productive activities. This is also due to them being scattered geographically. Many remain unemployed in spite of the fact that they wish to engage in productive employment.

As a nation, Sri Lanka is highly dependent on the remittances generated by the migrant workers who are mainly employed in the Middle Eastern countries. In fact it is at present the main source of foreign exchange for Sri Lanka, surpassing revenues gained through tea and garment industries.

It is mostly the lack of economic opportunities locally to cover the increasing cost of living that have caused people to leave the country for foreign employment. The above scenario leads to multiple affects of economic deprivation and social reintegration.

It is seen that most of the high density migrant populations are from economically and socially backward segments of society with low education attainment. Due to poor earning capacity and often inability to manage their earnings generated while in employment locally and overseas, poor investments are made in the most important areas such as education of children and income generating activities. One of the key reasons for these communities to remain where they are is not merely the lack of economic opportunity, but how they utilize the available finances. Alcohol consumption in almost all the communities in which the study was conducted was alarming. There is a direct correlation between the alcohol consumption and socio-economic marginalization at the family level that in fact push people for foreign employment. The reasons for alcohol abuse can of course be complex.

The poorer segments of society are infiltrated by the established foreign employment agencies mainly using sub-agents operating at the grassroots level. Such sub-agents, who are mostly from the village itself are well informed about the issues at family level and the service offered by them are either demand driven or supply driven. The sub agents are generally approached by prospective migrant workers. Occasions where the sub agents approach the clients are not uncommon. Using tacit or persuasive techniques they induce prospective migrants towards engaging in foreign employment.

Once the prospective migrant workers are convinced at the grassroots level, they are accompanied by the sub-agents to the parent organization usually based in a central town or a district centre where they are further informed about the income opportunities. Apart from sub-agents, advertisements in printed and electronic media by foreign employment agencies have also been seen to induce prospective migrant workers to their fold. TV advertisements have become very effective in enticing prospective migrants.

The contractual agreements are usually figured at the SLBFE in the presence of the prospective worker and the employment agency. The SLBFE ads as a catalyst or an intermediary.

Based on the links the local agency has with the agencies established overseas and how the agencies treat the employees suggest that there are many agencies that export human resources knowingly for their economic advantage for forced or coerced labour and sexual exploitation. Apart from exploitation of various forms, migrant workers' surrendering their passports to the employers is a common practice. At agencies most of the Buddhist migrant workers are advised to behave and camouflage themselves as followers of Christianity as it would aid them to avoid abuse. Some agencies based in overseas countries can be identified as major culprits that induce forced labour and gross exploitation. Such agencies and exploitative employers are generally immune from the legal system and law enforcement of the receiving countries which places the migrant workers in a risky position.

Such practices have continued to go undetected by the government authorities responsible mainly due to the lack of capacity of personnel or organizational capacity to operate at the international level. It is however not an excuse especially given the magnitude of economic contribution that the migrant workers make at the national level. Furthermore, as a signatory to the many international human rights instruments the Government of Sri Lanka is responsible for guaranteeing human rights of its citizens.

In spite of possible abuses and exploitation there are also many migrant workers who go overseas and return home with all ambitions met. Knowledge of the Arabic language, cultural adaptability, technical adaptability, general versatility, ability to take initiative and self esteem are the key determining factors leading to success. The general tendency is that the more skilled the employees are they are likely to earn more, save more and succeed. Apart from succeeding at the international setting, the more skilled worker generally acquire new skills and use the new skills to enhance their economic capacity upon return.

It is a fact that most of the migrant worker dense populations are located in easily detectable pockets in the Provinces. For example, the colony in Lunuwila, Wennappuwa consists of over 6,000 families, mostly living in poverty. There are many migrant workers in the area and most of them have gone for foreign employment for very poor wages. Knowing that they have received only Rs. 14,000 per month, they are prepared to go again as there are no alternative means of livelihood in the area.

It is the under-skilled workers that represent the most vulnerable from an economic and a social class point of view. Smoother re-adaptation of the returnee migrant workers to the local social conditions seems to be taking place in less socially marginalized communities. On one hand this is due to the returnee attitude and on the other hand, it is the community perspective and attitude about the returnee migrant worker.

9.2. Recommendations for a National Reintegration Policy

9.2.1. Background

The findings of the present study, point to the need for a national policy to facilitate reintegration of returnee migrant workers economically, socially and psychologically.

While it is true that most returnee migrant workers find some form of employment and begin to earn a living, a significant proportion of returnees remain underemployed or unemployed. Moreover, many returnee migrant workers also face difficulties in social and cultural adjustments at family and community level. It is also evident that many returnees do not have opportunities for the realization of their full potential due to various circumstances. What is also necessary to note is that a large proportion of both men and women are in relatively younger ages, most of whom with the age bracket of 26-45. It is evident from the present study that a vast majority of returnees have been engaged in unskilled and semi-skilled occupations in destination countries. Moreover only a small proportion of returnees have acquired useful or marketable skills during their employment overseas. As regards, savings, it is evident that though many have returned with savings, much of what they have brought has been used for consumption and on unproductive investments such as consumer durables and electrical items. Only a small proportion of returnee migrant workers have made productive investments.

A majority of returned migrants have found employment within six months of their return. However many, largely female returnees remain unemployed. Though returnees earn higher wages, wage levels are still relatively low, given the higher cost of living. Though a majority of returned migrants do not face social and psychological problems, a significant proportion face such issues. A national policy is required to identify vulnerable returnee migrant families and offer a range of economic and other services to integrate fully into the local economy and society.

It is against this background that the need to formulate a national policy has arisen in order to facilitate reintegration of returnee migrant workers within the overall national policy on labour migration. While the full implementation of the national policy on migrant workers also makes a contribution towards reintegration, the issues identified above need to be addressed within a related specific policy framework dealing with reintegration

It is in this context that the following recommendations are made with respect to a national policy on reintegration of returnee migrant workers. The primary aim of such a policy should be to address critical issues that seem to impede the process of reintegration of returnee migrant workers.

The existing policies relating to migrants do not address the issues faced by returnees in their attempt to reintegrate into the local economic and social environment. The new policy should address these issues in a co-ordinated fashion at national, regional and community levels.

In the remaining pages of this chapter we intend to indicate how the issues identified above shall be addressed through a national policy. For convenience of analysis and presentation, the issues will be discussed in the order they appear in the Chapter.

9.2.2. Economic Issues

Skill Base

As regards the skill base of returnee migrant workers it is necessary to recognize the fact that most migrant workers do not have specialized skills and therefore they end up in unskilled occupations or informal sector activities and many returnee migrant workers remain unemployed. Even among those employed, the majority earn low wages making their income situation similar to what it was before migration. In order to improve their life chances in the remaining years of their lives there is a need to address these issues. This cluster of issues, skills, employment and income is crucial for the wellbeing of returnee migrant workers and their families and therefore needs to be addressed in the context of a national policy on reintegration of returnee migrant workers.

Some of the ways of addressing the issues would be

- a. Identification and categorization of the skill profiles of returnees
- b. Provision of short term skills training
- c. Supporting and formulating small business development
- d. Organizing skilled and unskilled workers into guilds or cooperatives at Divisional level and facilitating reemployment in private sector establishments in the vicinity of their homes wherever it is feasible.

In other words, the purpose of the policy is to take certain proactive measures that would help the returnee migrant workers to find their way rather than to leave them to their own devices as is the case today.

Savings

Many returnee migrant workers lack substantial savings or any savings at all at the time they return to Sri Lanka. However, most of them have been able to send remittances home on a regular basis while they were abroad. Most of the earnings have been used to purchase consumables, pay off nagging loans and borrowings and thereby limiting the chances of returnee migrant workers saving funds that could potentially combat financial insecurity. Therefore the national policy on returnee migrant workers should include

- a. Providing incentives for saving by migrant workers (Better interest rates offered through banks, lottery schemes etc.)
- b. Encouraging monitored group savings programmes or cooperative savings schemes

Utilization of savings for productive purposes

Even in cases where there is sufficient savings, it is seen that a fairly large proportion of savings is used on unproductive asset accumulation such as essential and non-essential electrical and electronic items. Acquisition of productive assets is only seen among a minority of returnee migrant workers. Most of them lack the capacity to figure out what to prioritize on, in regards to utilization of savings mainly due to the relatively low educational attainment. Therefore there is a need for returnee migrant workers to be:

- a. Convinced about a list of priorities that include the importance of investing in the education of children, acquisition of productive lands or properties etc that could lead to a positive change
- b. Made aware about prioritizing their developmental needs
- c. Providing low interest investment loans for migrant workers at the beginning of their employment or upon return.
- d. Providing technical guidance where required
- e. Development of trained social workers to support returnee migrant workers in all aspects after their return and support their families while they are abroad

Productivity and Income

Most migrant workers have worked hard and long hours in their destination countries. Though there has often been an element of compulsion in the employer, worker relationship, relatively better pay has been a motivating factor. In other words, there is a possibility of productivity improvement provided the right employment conditions are offered to retain migrants in Sri Lanka. This is an important area where policy interventions can play a significant part. Reintegration policy may address this issue as follows.

- a. Skill development and training to improve productivity and performance
- b. Ensuring the migrant workers are paid an acceptable wage in their workplaces upon return in keeping with performance and productivity levels
- c. Establishing viable export oriented industries and industrial zones in the migrant worker areas. Such industries should ideally be partnerships involving the public sector, the private sector and already existing or newly established peoples' cooperatives with enhanced capacity to undertake fairly large contracts.
- d. Establishing an employment link service at a District or Divisional Secretariat Division level to facilitate reintegration of returnee migrant workers.
- e. Encouragement of private investment to establish enterprises to absorb unemployed returnee migrants.

9.2.3. Social Issues***Adapting to the present situation***

There are many issues that impede the readjustment of migrant workers to their family and social environments in Sri Lanka after their return. Some of the issues are related to adapting to their family lives while many often are concerned with spouse, children, extended families, relations and the wider community.

While the above broader issues need to be addressed, it is also necessary to recognize micro level issues as much as relational problems that can impede adjustment at the family level. Moreover, research shows that they are also victims of sexual and physical violence who need additional support. Sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV & AIDS have also affected some migrant workers. These issues also adversely affect the reintegration of some returnee migrants in many ways.

Children taking time to get used to the migrant worker is also seen to impede the re-adaptation of returnee migrant workers. Therefore the scenario should be addressed along three different lines

a. Spouse

- i. Providing counseling for families (Since professional counseling is not widely available and people are not used to obtaining professional counseling services, they should be provided with incentives to encourage them to do so.
- ii. Offering opportunity to migrants for voluntary screening for communicable diseases and infections such as HIV and other STIs.

b. Children

- i. Providing training for returnee migrant workers on relevant practical approaches to child development through schools and community based organizations
- ii. Designing a handbook/manual that provides guidelines to resolve issues between migrants and their children

c. Family and society

- i. Providing guidance for migrant workers to understand, accept and cope with various behavioral problems in the context of and various situations with family members, extended family and the community.

Empowering family and society

As mentioned above, there are contextual changes that slow down the process of reintegration. It is important to look at such issues from the migrant's family and society perspective as much as looking at the issue from a migrant's perspective. Therefore, a reintegration policy should also look at social issue resolution from a spouse, children, family, and community perspective. Even though social reintegration seems to be taking place effectively, engagement of returnee migrant workers in peoples' forums is low.

a. Spouse

- i. Offering opportunity to spouses for voluntary screening for HIV and other STIs

b. Children

- i. Providing trainings for children of migrant workers, probably through schools

c. Family and society

- i. Conducting media campaigns to create public awareness about the economic and national contribution that the migrant workers make so that their contributions are better recognized by the extended families and society at large
- ii. Returnee migrant workers should be provided with long term incentives to engage in such forums effectively.

9.2.4. Psychological Issues

Coping with past experiences overseas

During pre migration, as a migrant worker and as a returnee migrant worker, the least emphasis is given to the psychological state of the migrant worker, or the members of the families of migrant workers. Through our findings, it is evident that there are many psychological issues pertaining to migrants and their families. One important aspect is that the experiences of migrant workers such as exploitative situations in host countries and physical and emotional scars are then brought back by the returnees. Such types of need to be minimized by

- a. Providing counseling for migrants and families where necessary upon return
- b. Providing support to redress any grievances regarding lost wages, compensation etc to the employee through effective co-ordination with the foreign employment agency in order to safeguard the interest of the returnee migrant worker.

Coping with future challenges

Another aspect that requires the returnee migrant workers to cope with is the challenge to meet the requirements for the future wellbeing of their family. Along with the rising cost of living, it is increasingly difficult for migrants to manage the family budgets. Furthermore children whose health, care, nutrition have suffered during the migration of parent, resulting in depressing situations for the migrant worker and the family require attention. Therefore, the following proposals are made.

- a. Provide economic and emotional support at family and individual level
- b. Provide guidance on financial management and future social security options.

9.2.5. Stakeholder networking

An inclusive, consultative and collective approach at every level is proposed to facilitate reintegration of the returnee migrant workers and to reduce the adverse impacts on migrant workers before and after migration and most importantly after returning. Such a mechanism should monitor, provide support where necessary till the returnee migrant workers are fully reintegrated economically, socially and psychologically.

Stakeholder interaction with returnee migrant workers should start at the destination country where contract durations and the exact time of return should be known by the Sri Lankan Embassy in the destination country, the agency in the destination country, the agency in Sri Lanka, the SLBFE, Sri Lankan Immigration Department and Sri Lanka Customs.

There is a need for a community level, organizational arrangement to revive the returnee migrant workers and attend to any immediate needs they may have. This community level committee shall comprise the village level government officer and representatives of non governmental organizations active locally. A relevant officer affiliated to the DS office need to coordinate various interventions at a Divisional level.

Their role would be to identify returnee migrant worker families that experience difficulties of economic and social reintegration and thereby link them to a programme of interventions to be implemented at District or Divisional levels. As indicated earlier, such an intervention should encompass economic and social components such as market and employment linkage, training and skill enhancement, enterprise development, social support and counseling.

Through professionally trained personnel at Divisional Secretariat there should be coordination that bring state and non-state institutes into a network to address issues faced by returnee migrant workers.



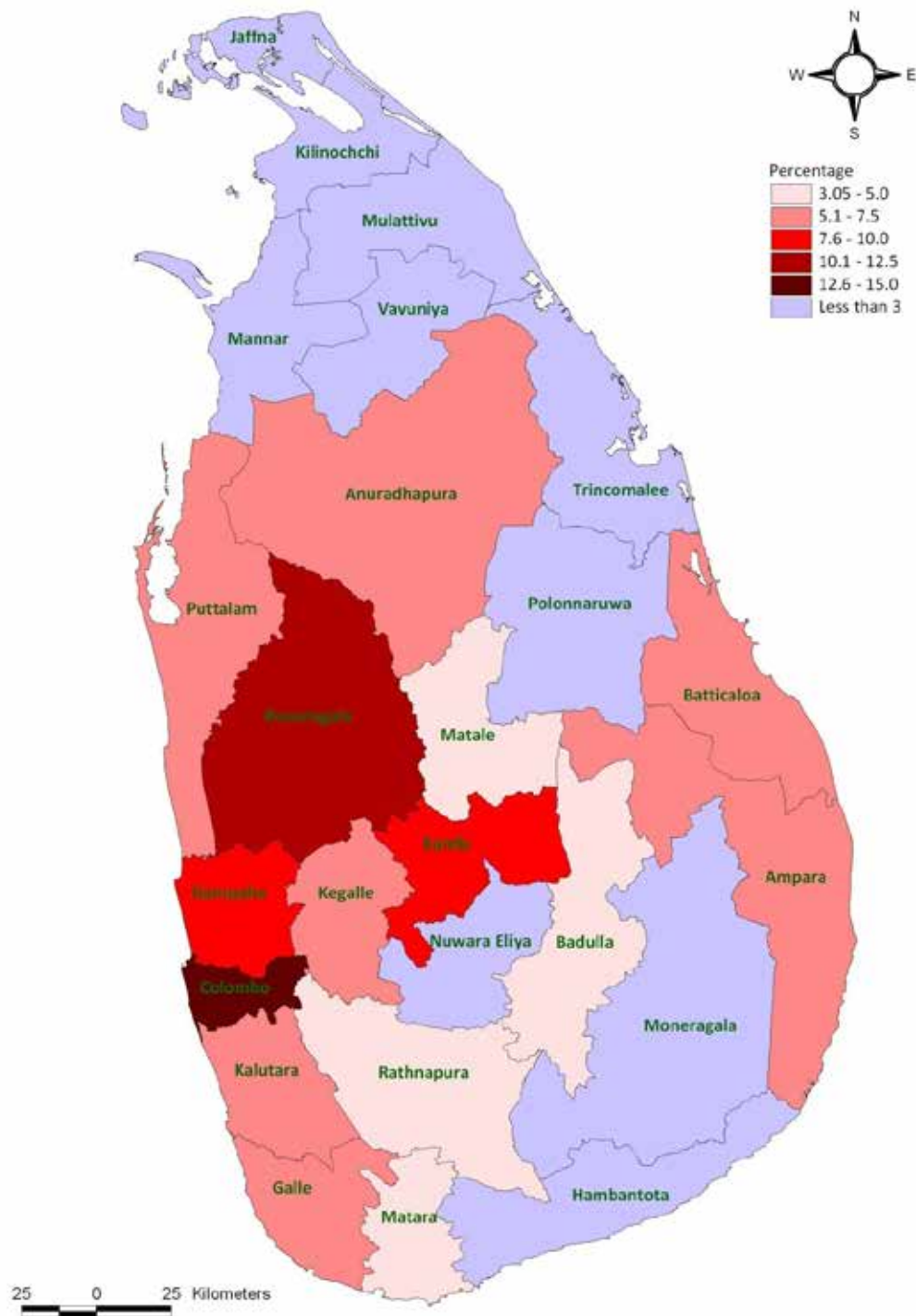
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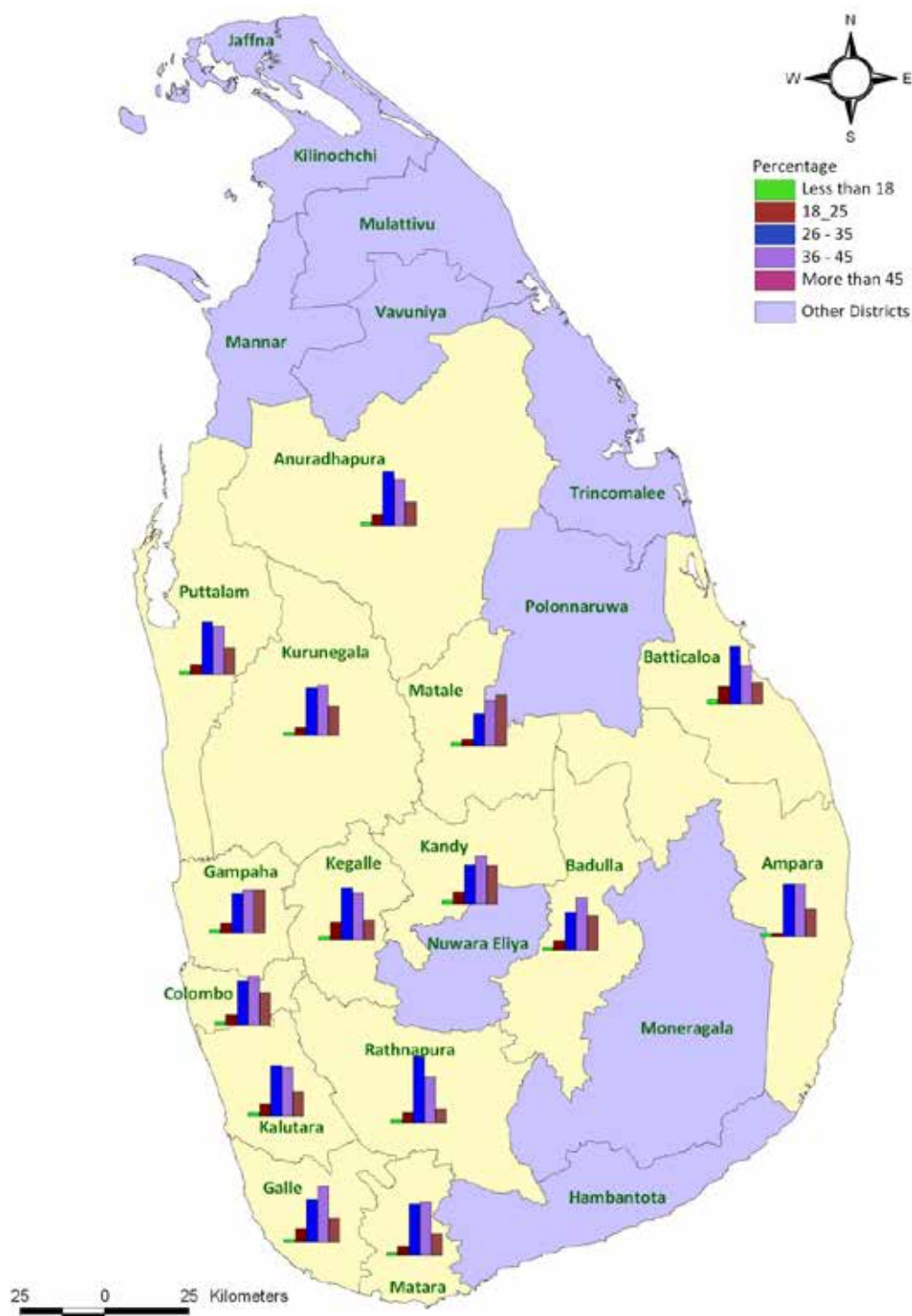
11 Maps

1. Density of migrant worker population in Sri Lanka



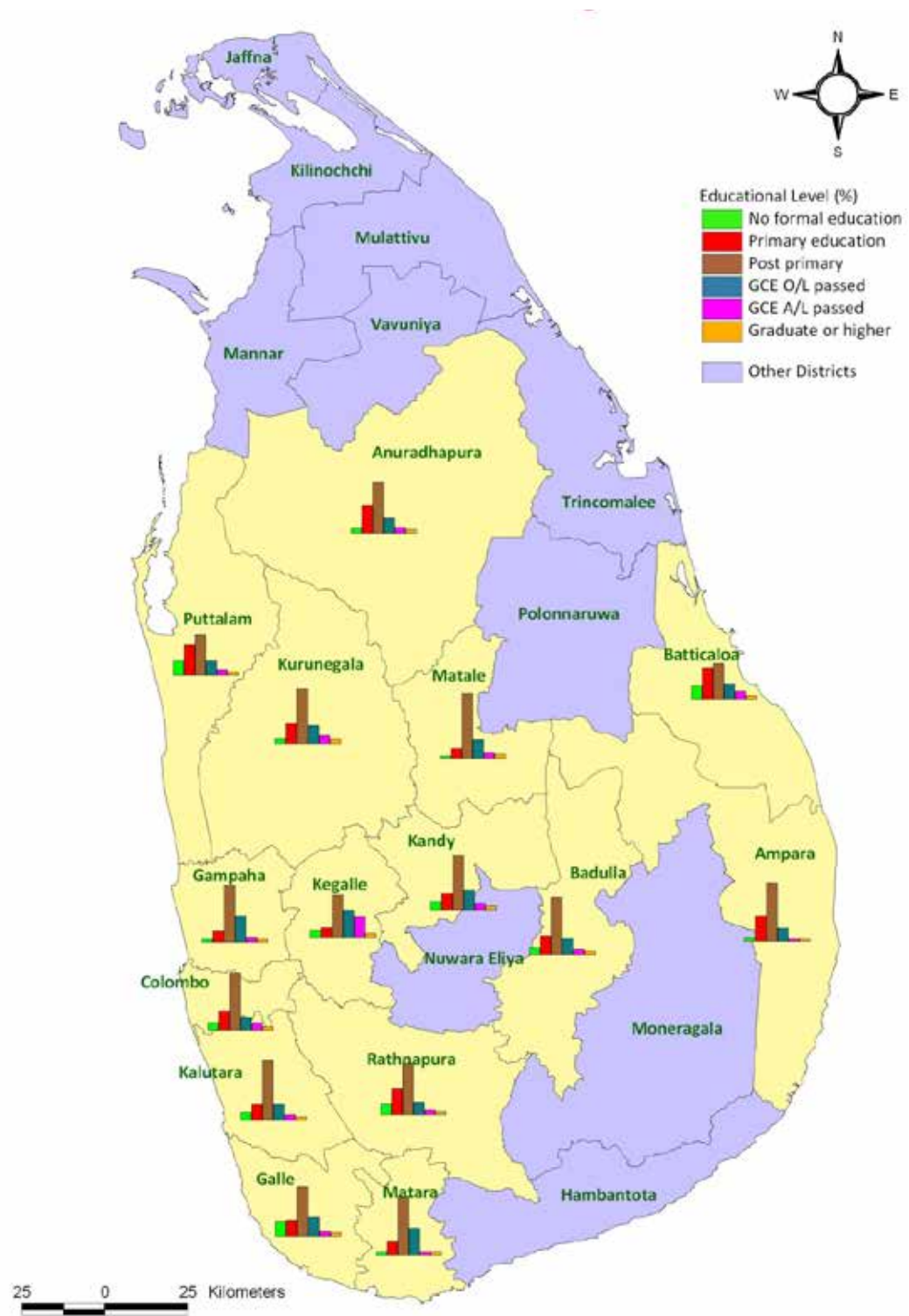
(Source: Survey data)

2. Age distribution of migrant workers



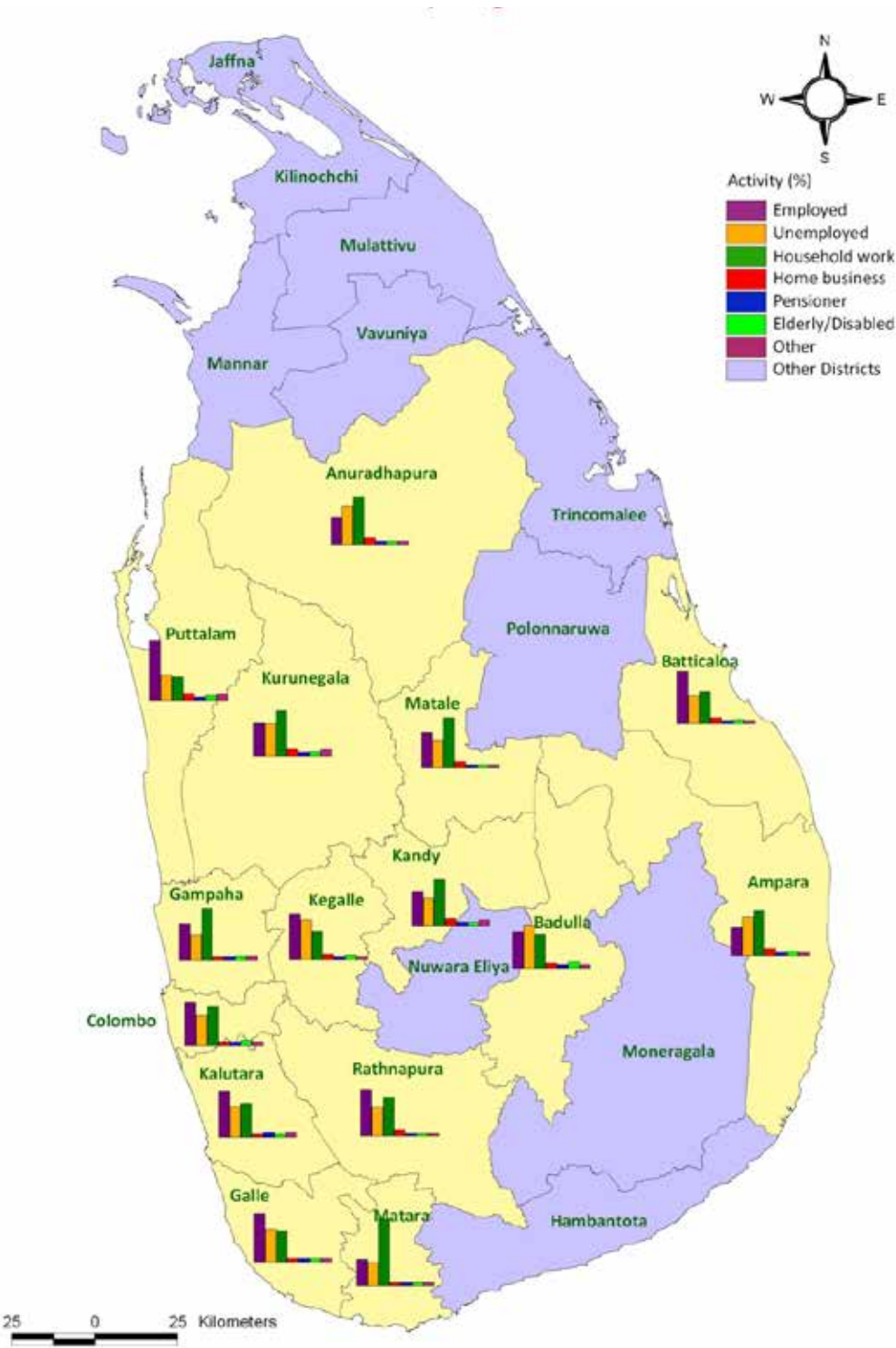
(Source: Survey data)

3. Educational levels of migrant workers



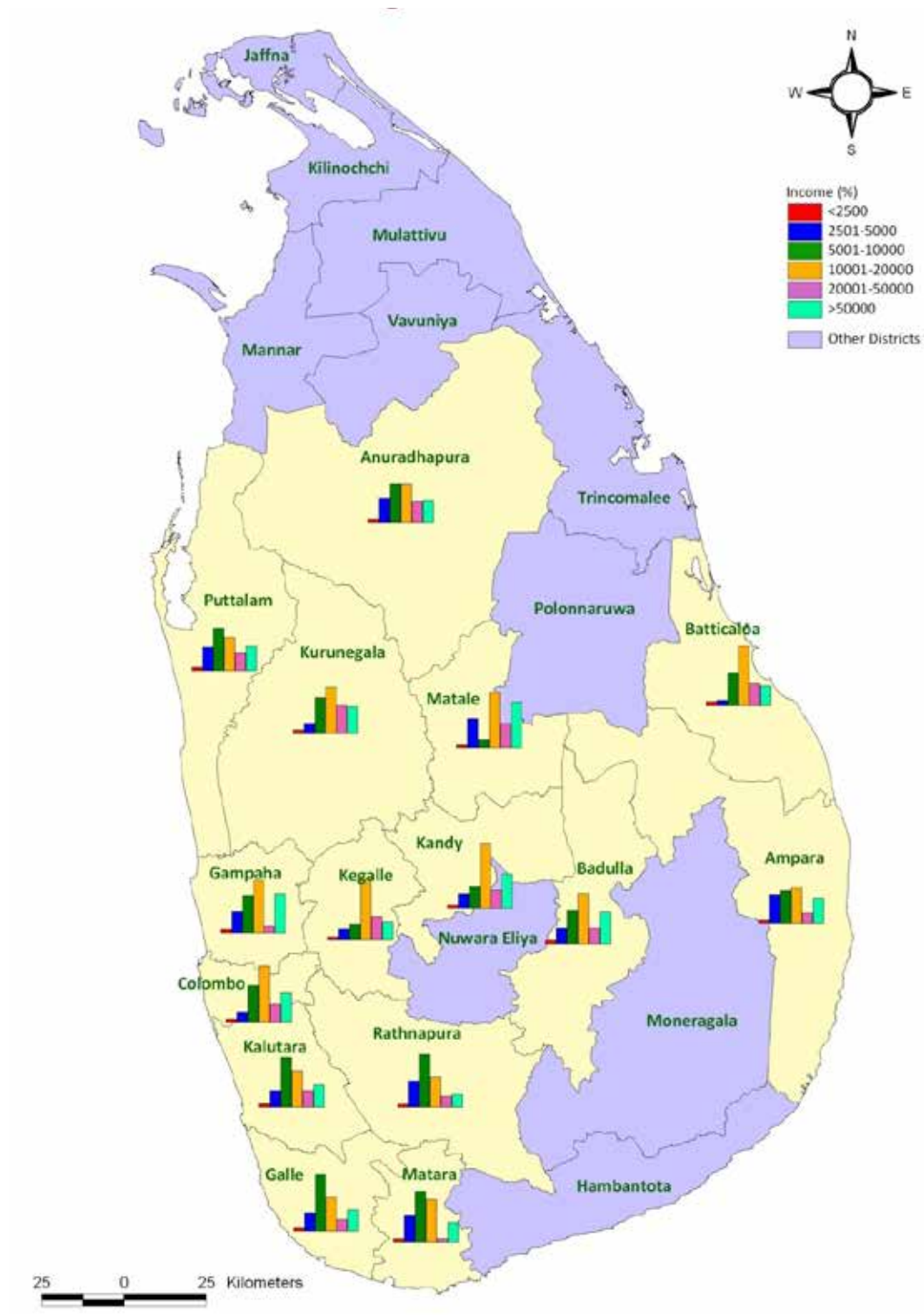
(Source: Survey data)

4. Activity status of migrant workers



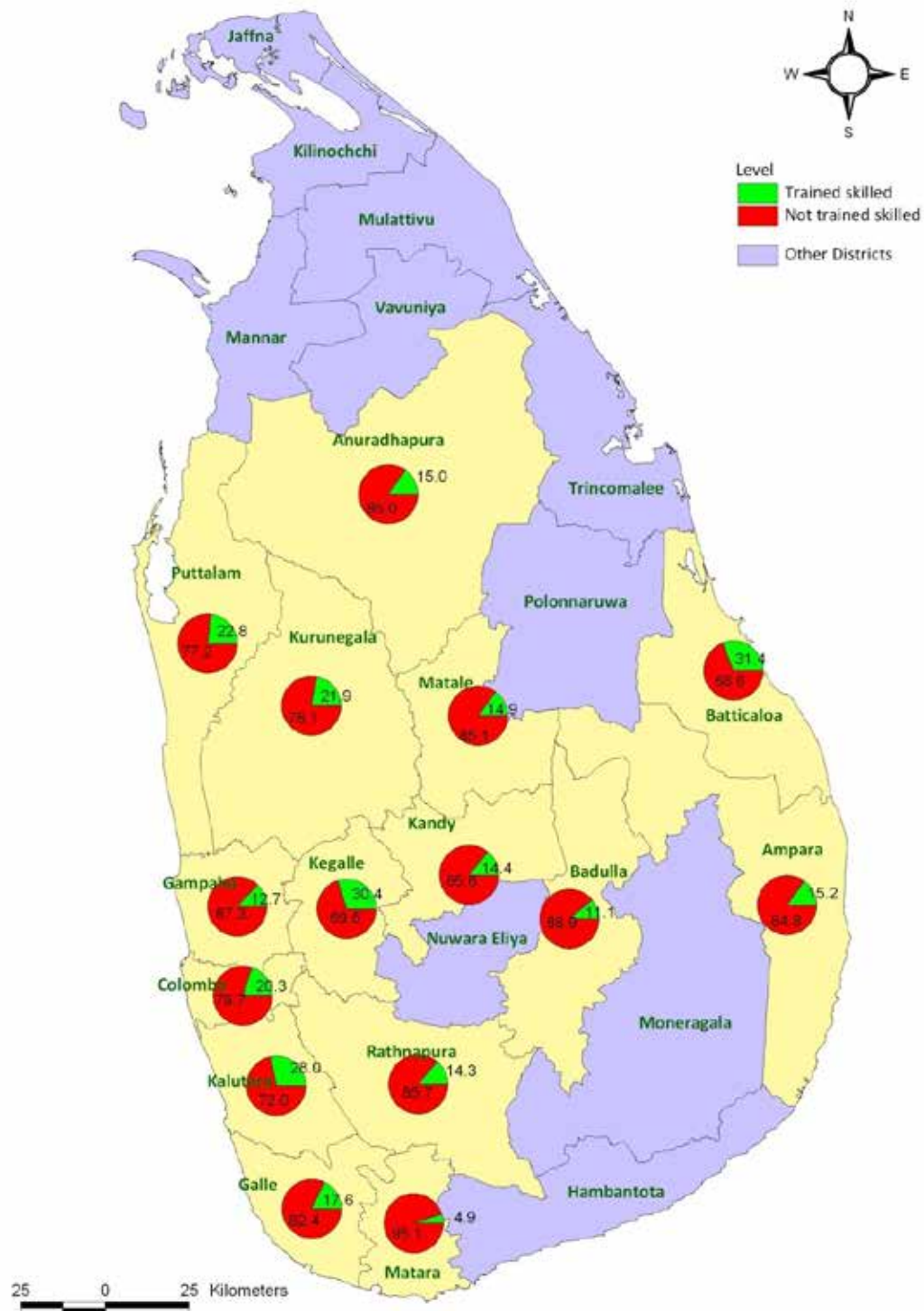
(Source: Survey data)

5. Income levels of migrant workers



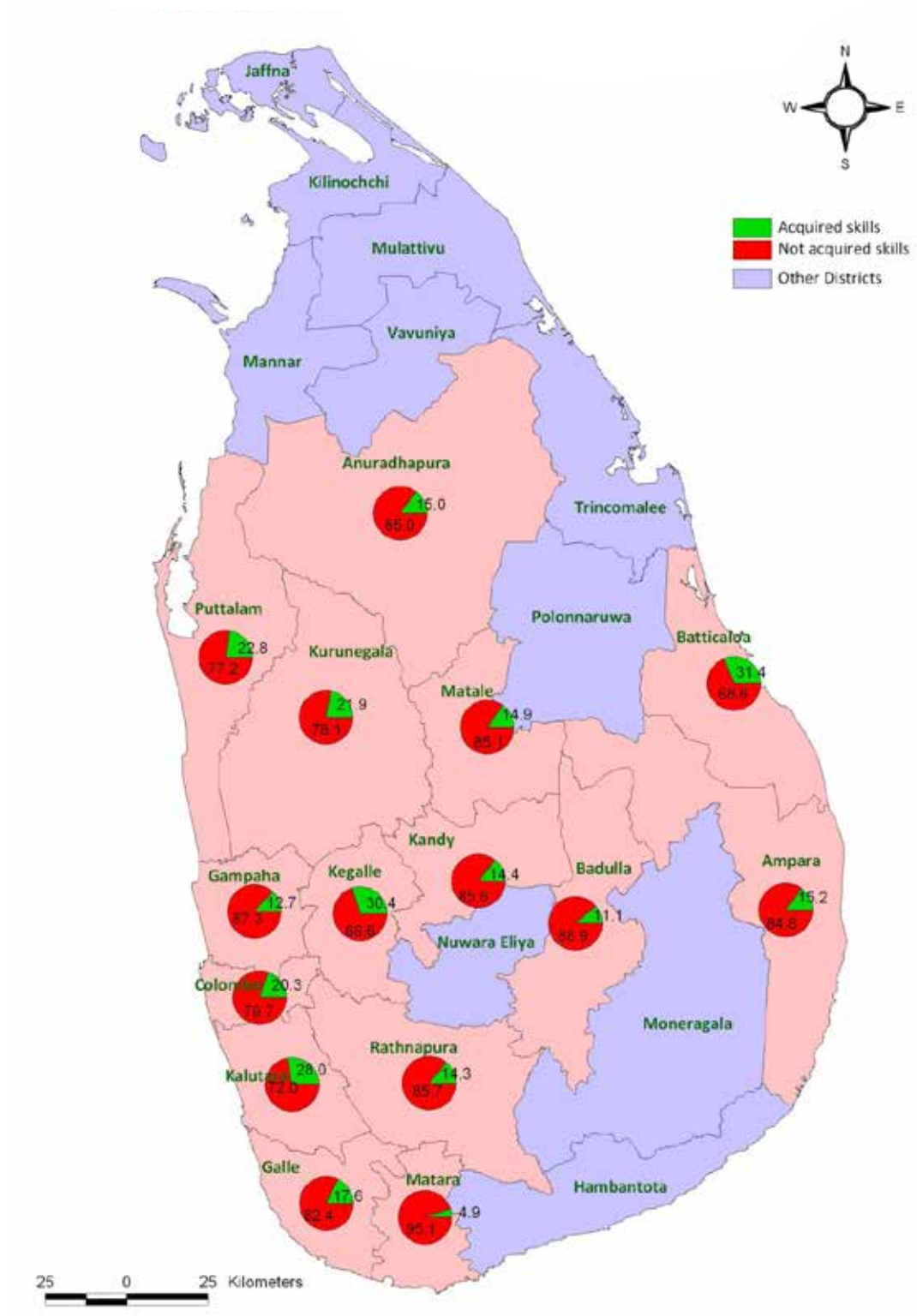
(Source: Survey data)

6. Migrants who receive training prior to their departure



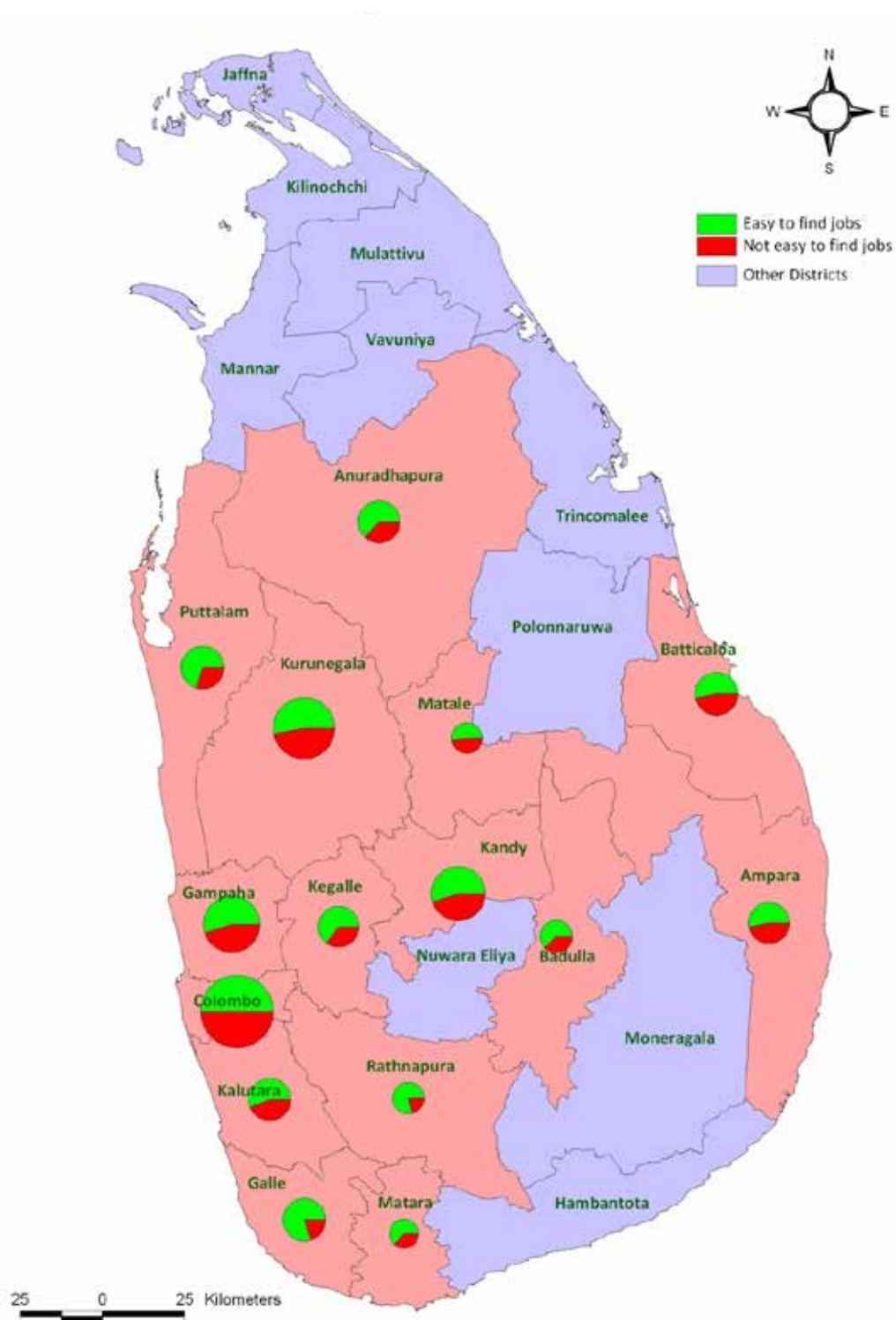
(Source: Survey data)

7. Percentage of migrant workers who have acquired job related skills



(Source: Survey data)

8. Availability of income avenues for migrant workers



(Source: Survey data)

Project on Promoting Decent Work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers:
Ensuring the effective implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy

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