

Re-migration intention among urban migrants in the Gampaha District*

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Literature on urban migration in Sri Lanka over the past decades has emphasized that migration plays a vital role in urban population dynamics. Since 1977, the Gampaha District of the Western Province has become a popular urban-ward migration destination and a significant proportion of young people have migrated for employment especially to the Free Trade Zones (FTZs). Many studies have focused on determinants of urban migration. However, research on re-migration intention of urban migrants seems inadequate. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the issues faced by urban migrants and factors that influence urban-ward migration and re-migration intentions.

The study is based on quantitative and qualitative data gathered from selected urban communities in the Gampaha urban areas. Data were obtained from a sample survey using an interviewer administered questionnaire covering 400 migrant households.

Qualitative information was gathered using in-depth interviews. Descriptive analysis and logistic regression were used for quantitative data while content analysis was used for the qualitative data. Findings revealed that the male-headed households were higher than their female counterparts. More than half of the respondents (60%) had only secondary or primary education. A higher percentage of more educated migrants had an intention to re-migrate due to disturbances faced in current urban living. Urban to urban migration (59.7%) was higher than rural to urban migration. Factors such as marriage, development programs, family reasons and respondents' age at migration were the major factors influencing urban migration. The qualitative analysis also found that inadequate social amenities and poor economic backgrounds lead to urban-ward migration. However, migrants intend to re-migrate in search of more comfortable livelihoods after experiencing negative consequences of migration. Findings suggest that improving physical infrastructure and human capital utilization and decentralizing public services and institutions in the rural contexts would reduce the negative consequences of urban-ward migration.

Keywords: factors; influencing; urban migration; households; re-migration

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