

BENEFITS OF MIGRATION: A CASE STUDY OF RETURNEE MIGRANTS IN A FISHING COMMUNITY IN PUTTALAM DISTRICT

Dilki Ishara^{1,*} and Roshini Jayaweera^{2,*}

***Abstract:** Returnee migrant reintegration is an important area in Sri Lanka as majority of Sri Lankan migrants are temporary migrants and return back to the home country at the end of the contract period. Acquired benefits from migration play a vital role in economic reintegration of returnee migrants. Therefore, the objective of this study is to assess the gained benefits from migration and examine how these benefits are used for future investments. This objective is achieved by analysing primary data collected from returnee migrants in a fishing community in Puttalam district. Findings of the study reveal that migrant workers have achieved many benefits such as building houses, spending on children's education, repayment of loans and purchasing vehicles and other durables while they were overseas. However, only a limited number of returnees have saved money and invested. Further, those who have acquired savings, skills and social networking have not been able to use them for future investment.*

Keywords: Migration, Returnee migrants, Reintegration

Introduction

Migration and remittances have become an important livelihood strategy in many developing countries. International migration is defined by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) as the movement of persons who leave their country of origin, or the country of habitual residence, to reside either permanently or temporarily in another country (IOM, 2008). As can be seen in the Figure 1, number of international migrants worldwide has increased rapidly since 1990s. In 2019, the number of international migrants worldwide was nearly 272 million, up from 221 million in 2010 and 174 million in 2000 (UN, 2019). In line with this large number of international migrants, the developing world is receiving a huge quantity of remittances.

¹ University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. Email: dilkiishara08@gmail.com

² Senior Lecturer, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. Email: roshinij@kln.ac.lk

* Both authors contributed equally to this paper.