

DOMINANCE OF FEMALE IN INTERNAL MIGRATION IN SRI LANKA.

Swarna Ukwatte

Abstract: The objective of this paper is to provide information on female internal migration patterns and trends in Sri Lanka in 1981 and 1994. Popular destinations of female migrants, their streams in 1994, demographic, socio-economic characteristics of female migrants and determinants and consequences of migration in 1994 are analyzed. Place of birth method was used. The 1981 Census of Population and Housing and the 1994 Demographic Survey were the main sources of data. The volume of migration has increased during 1981 to 1994; the percentage of male lifetime migrants had decreased marginally, while the female lifetime migrants had increased significantly. Movements of the females are more prominent in the working age groups and highest in the age range 25-34. Non-migrants are concentrated in the younger age groups. In all the districts, majority of the female in-migrants and non migrants are Sinhalese. Labour force participation of the in-migrants is more than that of the non-migrants. Economically active female migrants are generally low; a majority of them are employed. Thirteen per cent of the females migrated for employment, mostly in agriculture, manufacturing and elementary occupations. In spite of the perceived economic advantages, there are adverse effects experienced by the unmarried females who are employed in the garment industry. Majority of the female migrants are engaged in household work. Approximately one tenth are heads of households, majority currently married. The incidence of marriage dissolution is higher among in-migrants than non-migrants. The proportion who migrated to live in own house or due to civil disturbances is relatively small. Current female migration patterns in Sri Lanka have effectuated a significant change in the age structure of the resident population.