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**FEMALE MIGRATION FROM SRI LANKA TO THE MIDDLE-EAST: IS THE REMEDY WORSE  
THAN THE DISEASE.**

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**Abstract:** The outflow of female migrant workers to other countries, and especially to the Middle East, has become a striking feature of the Sri Lankan labour market. Public interest in this phenomenon has been increasingly generated in the context of restricted job opportunities and rising unemployment in the country. Migrant remittances not only comprise a very important source of foreign exchange to Sri Lanka, but are also believed to contribute significantly as a source of family income and support for low and middle income households. Data confirm that female migrants are mostly unskilled workers, and in the age group 24 to 39 years. Over 75 per cent are married, while the majority of them have young children. This paper is based on a micro-level study conducted in selected administrative divisions of Southern Sri Lanka, and it inquires into the effects of female migration on the family left behind. The findings highlight the fact that adverse emotional and social consequences of female migration far outweigh any economic benefits.