

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACTS OF
THE MIGRATION OF
SRI LANKAN TRANSNATIONAL DOMESTIC WORKERS
ON FAMILIES AND CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND**

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ABSTRACT

Some of the world's largest flows of temporary migrant workers originate in Asian countries. Almost all of these migration flows involve the separation of the migrant from their families whether extended or nuclear. Consequently, transnational families in which one or more members are out of the country for several years are increasingly common in the Asian region. Moreover, there are increasing numbers of migrant families with one or both parents being overseas for work for a significant part of the growing up of their children. In the Asian region, a large proportion of absent mothers are found in countries like the Philippines, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka. While the issue of the families and children left behind by migrant women has been intensively studied from a number of perspectives in the Asian Region, especially in the Philippines, it remains under-researched and indeed little understood in Sri Lanka, which is one of the major suppliers of overseas domestic workers.

Currently, the Sri Lankan government faces a dilemma. On one hand, remittances from overseas migrant workers overseas are the second largest source of foreign export earnings, and 60 per cent of this is from the migrants in Middle East countries where the majority of domestic workers are employed. On the other hand, there is a growing concern with the social effects of that movement on the children left behind by migrant women. Some countries in the region have banned the deployment of women migrant workers, but this has simply channelled them into undocumented flows. Although the government of Sri Lanka had several discussions to restrict the migration of females, it was found such a decision would be unworkable. A virtual vacuum of empirical evidence regarding the effects of the absence of mothers on their families and children left behind is recognised. Therefore, by examining how the families and children left behind are influenced by the migration of the "light of the home", this thesis provides valuable information that is urgently required by policy makers.

The thesis reports on a field survey of 400 Sri Lankan families where the mother has gone to work in a foreign country as a domestic worker and detailed discussions with key stakeholders in the study area. It examines the effects of the migration of domestic workers on the economic and social situation of their families and children. On one hand, the effects of increased money on the overall economic well-being of their families and the education of children are positive. On the other hand, there are several negative impacts on the behavioural

patterns and health of the children left behind and the family as a whole. This study also reports on the arrangements that are made by the migrant women for taking care of the children while they are away and how they maintain intimacy with their families from a distance. Differences in the impacts are investigated between urban, rural, and estate based households as well as according to the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the migrants. In addition, the thesis discusses the demographic and socio-economic context of Sri Lanka and the improvement in socio-economic levels and international migration patterns of females to provide a comprehensive picture of domestic worker migration. It also develops a theoretical framework of transnational domestic worker migration in Sri Lanka.

Finally, it explores some of the policy implications of the findings, and suggests some recommendations in maximising the positive effects and minimising the negative effects of women's migration on families and children. It further argues that there is a need to explore best practice models, which support the families of migrant workers but also facilitate regular intimate contact between migrant and family while gaining economic advantages of migration. There is every indication that migration of this type will continue and indeed increase as the drivers of it are intensifying, and banning the movement of women domestics has been attempted in several Asian contexts with negative results for the women involved.

DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or any other tertiary institution, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis being made available in the Discipline of Geographical and Environmental Studies/The University Library for loan and photocopying.

Swarnalatha Ukwatta

January 2010

DEDICATION

To my father who passed away during my PhD candidature, mother, husband, son, daughter-in-law, and daughter for their unconditional love and support

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ACRONYMS

CBSL	Central Bank of Sri Lanka
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DC&S	Department of Census and Statistics
DS	Divisional Secretariat
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council countries
GCE O/L	General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level
GCE A/L	General Certificate of Education Advanced Level
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GN	Grama Niladhari
HDI	Human Development Index
ICMR	UN Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Family
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMI	International Migration Institute
IMPP	International Migration Policy Programme
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
NIEs	Newly Industrialised Economies
OCW	Overseas Contract Worker
SL Rs.	Sri Lanka Rupees
SLBFE	Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment
SPSS	Statistical Product and Service Solutions
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
WHO	World Health Organisation

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Migration is recognised as beneficial to both sending and receiving countries. It relieves unemployment pressures in countries of origin, and provides productive labour and an economic lifeline for millions of women and men. At the same time, remittances have a very positive impact on home economies representing a significant source of external funding for many developing countries. In addition, migration can be empowering in terms of higher self-esteem, and increased economic independence of migrant workers.

(Chammartin 2004a, p.8)

1.1 Introduction

Sri Lanka has seen a country with increasing numbers of women who are employed as domestic workers overseas over the last three decades (Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) 2009; Kageyama 2008; Gamburd 2003). Consequently, a greater number of “transnational families” have emerged with female members being away from their families for several years. United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) (2006, p.33) defines transnational families as:

the families whose core members are located in at least two nation-states and members in these families belong to two households, two cultures and two economies simultaneously. These take many forms and are marked by changing heads of household including grandmothers and youth who take charge of children while the parent(s) are away.

Economic factors such as severe economic hardships, indebtedness, increasing living cost, and the compelling desire for a better standard of living are some of the main reasons that stimulate Sri Lankan women migrating overseas (SLBFE 2009; Shaw 2008a; Gamburd 2005; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a, 2004b; Ratnayake 1999). There were approximately 1.8 million Sri Lankan migrant workers worldwide in 2008 with 252,021 new recruits (SLBFE 2009, pp.3, 113), and 48.9 per cent of them being females (SLBFE 2009, p.3). What is significant here is the deployment of a large proportion of females as “domestic workers”¹. In 2008, it was 88.2 per cent of all female migrant departures (SLBFE 2009, p.11).

¹ Domestic work refers to ‘the labour activities that sustain the daily maintenance of a household , which is accomplished by a variety of agents with multiple formats and in different settings’ (Lan 2003, p.188).

Transnational migrants, regardless of gender², bring economic benefits not only to their families but also to the Sri Lankan economy (Shaw 2008a; Kottegoda 2006; Gamburd 2005; Lasagabaster *et al.* 2005; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Gunatilleke 1998; Athukorala 1990). In 2008, workers' remittances to Sri Lanka reached Sri Lanka Rupees (SL Rs.) 316,118 million (US \$2.8 billion³) of which 59.8 per cent were from workers in the Middle East where the majority of females are employed (SLBFE 2009, p.105). Lasagabaster *et al.* (2005, p.1) explain that these remittances:

have exceeded Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows by two to three times; more than doubled the net receipts of foreign assistance; reached close to 25 per cent of export earnings; and second only to the garment industry.

Moreover, about 10 per cent of total households in Sri Lanka were recipients of remittances (Lasagabaster *et al.* 2005, p.1), and these remittances have served as a means for 'poverty alleviation and income levelling for an estimated one fifth of the population living in poverty' (Rodrigo 1999, p.174). However, the impacts of the migrant women's remittances on the well-being of families depend on a combination of factors. Pre-departure costs, duration of work abroad, nature and working conditions, salary of migrants, money management skills of the migrants and their family members, and the maintenance of local income sources when the migrant is away are some of them (Shaw 2008b; Hadi 1999; Hugo 1994).

Unlike countries like Bangladesh and Nepal, the Sri Lankan government does not impose restrictions on women leaving the country for employment abroad (Afsar 2005; Raghuram 2005; Gamburd 2000; Soysa 1992) since their remittances have been a major component of household income and foreign earnings to the country (Kageyama 2008; Shaw 2008a; Lasagabaster *et al.* 2005; Athukorala 1990). The government has recognised the importance of migrants' contribution to their households and to the country's economy, and implemented a number of programmes to facilitate foreign employment (Lasagabaster *et al.* 2005). However, the recognition of women's economic contribution to the country's economy and to the

² Gender refers to 'the social meanings associated with being male or female, including the construction of identities, expectations, behaviours and power relations that derive from social interaction'. The term gender acknowledges 'the ideologies, behaviours and practices with respect to women and men are socially learned and that gender norms, practices and hierarchies vary within regions, across societies and time, and are subject to change' (United Nations (UN) 2005, p.14).

³ One US \$ = SL Rs.113.53 according to the exchange rate viewed 18 February 2009, <http://www.cbsl.gov.lk/info/_cei/er/e_1.asp>.

households is being offset to some extent by a growing concern of the social costs that migration involves. Therefore, the migration of women for overseas employment has become an issue of public debate due to two main reasons:

- the recognition of harmful consequences of the long-term separation of women on their families and children left behind; and
- the problems women face in preparing for migration, during their migration journey and upon their return (Daily News 2007; Human Rights Watch 2007).

Media, especially the newspapers, frequently report sad stories of domestic workers abroad. These stories include:

- depressed living and working conditions of women abroad;
- abuses of women migrants, especially the physical and sexual harassments; and
- women who have been left stranded at the destination countries or in-transit.

In addition, they often stress the harmful consequences of the long-term separation of women on the well-being of families and children despite the economic and social benefits the migrants' families receive (Save the Children 2006; Rodrigo 1999; Eelens 1995; Fernando 1989). Moreover, the complaints received by the SLBFE from female migrant workers have become a major concern for policy makers (*Asian Migration News* 1-31 August 2008). However, of the total complaints received in 2007, 85 per cent were from females, and it is only 0.7 per cent of the total female migrant stock in 2007 (SLBFE 2008, pp.65, 69).

Currently, the Sri Lankan government faces a dilemma. There is a need to promote migration for overseas employment, as it is the second highest source of foreign earnings in Sri Lanka (SLBFE 2009, p.105). There is also a growing concern about the problems faced by the children left behind by migrant mothers (*Daily News* 15 March 2007; *Human Rights Watch* 2007). The latter led to a proposal for a new legislation to prohibit women with children aged under 5 years old being involved in migration, and allow women with children above five years of age to migrate only if they had made appropriate childcare arrangements (*Asian Migration News* 1-15 March 2007a; *Daily News* 15 March 2007). Although migrant women make childcare arrangements before their departure, there is a requirement for proper

arrangements at family or institutional level in minimising the negative effects of migration on children depending on the type of family, whether it is nuclear or extended.

If these women are not allowed to migrate, they may find alternatives, often undocumented, to migrate or to earn money (Ukwatta and Hugo 2009; Pham and Harrod 2008). The following quotation of Gamburd (2005, p.100) highlights the danger of banning Sri Lankan female migration:

Female migration from Sri Lanka has always been legal and is likely to remain so in the future for three reasons. First, laws restricting women's migration would be challenged in the courts as violations of women's fundamental rights. Second, the sheer volume of female migration and the government's dependence on the money these migrants remit make such a ban an impractical. Third, policy makers recognise that such a ban would funnel these women in to undocumented and illegal migration, creating even greater problems of the same type. The result of Nepal's recent ban on female migration, with an increase of illegal networks that place women at greater risks illustrates this point.

Furthermore, evidence from the countries like Indonesia is that:

where the migration of women to work as domestic workers is banned, it merely forces the migration underground so that women move as undocumented migrants and are even more vulnerable to exploitation (Hugo 1992, p.182).

In addition, banning women's migration with young children will further violate their rights to freedom of mobility, development and employment while it will lead to disorderly migration and the trafficking of women (*Asian Migration News* 1-15 April 2007b; *Human Rights Watch* 2007). Moreover, it will affect the Sri Lankan economy since migrant remittances are the second highest source of foreign earnings in Sri Lanka.

Accordingly, the government reconsidered its position and it was felt such a decision would be unworkable. Critics of the scheme argued that:

- a blanket ban is not the solution to the problem although they admitted the possibility of social problems arising when mothers leave their children behind (*Asian Migration News* 1-30 May 2007c);
- the government attempted to make such decisions without careful consideration or proper planning (*Asian Migration News* 1-15 March 2007a);

- the government needs to establish support services to improve the conditions of migrant families instead of banning migration (*Asian Migration News* 1-31 August 2008); and
- these discussions on banning migration were largely influenced by the available statistics, which indicated that many children left behind by migrant mothers have become vulnerable to abuse and suffer from malnutrition and proper health care without considering the advantages of their migration (*Asian Migration News* 1-15 March 2007a).

Therefore, there is a need to find options that could minimise the negative impacts and maximise the positive impacts of migration, if the government does not impose restrictions on women's migration. In 2008, the Sri Lankan Foreign Employment and Welfare Ministry prepared a draft of a new National Policy on Labour Migration to be presented to the government in relation to three areas: regulations on good governance, protection and welfare of migrants and development aspects of labour migration (*Asian Migration News* 1-31 August 2008). However, further investigations are required on both economic and social impacts of female migration. Previous research on the impact of migration in Sri Lanka has focused mainly on economic impacts while the social impacts have attracted little research attention. Hence, this study seeks to contribute in this area.

This initial chapter first presents the objectives of the study (Section 1.2). It then specifies the research questions addressed to achieve the objectives (Section 1.3). Subsequent sections of the chapter highlight the significance of the study. It begins with a brief account of the demographic and economic context of Sri Lanka presented in Section 1.4 to provide a better understanding of the background for the steep increase in the numbers of Sri Lankan women migrating as domestic workers overseas and as an increasingly complex “global care drain”⁴. It then moves to a discussion of the contribution of migrants' remittances to the Sri Lankan economy (Section 1.5). In this section, women's contribution to the foreign earnings in Sri Lanka is highlighted. Finally, the chapter provides a concise description of the changing

⁴ In addition to brain drain, Hochschild (2002, p.17) identified ‘a parallel but more hidden and wrenching trend’ which is known as “global care drain”. It is defined as ‘women who normally care for the young, the old and the sick in their own poor countries move to care for the young, the old and the sick in rich countries, whether as maids and nannies or as day-care and nursing-home aides’.

scholarly attention towards female domestic worker migration in the Asian region with special focus on Sri Lanka to show the usefulness and the value of the study (Sections 1.6 and 1.7). The chapter concludes by explaining the organisation of the thesis (Section 1.8).

1.2 Objectives of the study

The main aim and the specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- Main aim:** To investigate the economic and social impacts of Sri Lankan females migrating overseas as domestic workers on their families and children left behind.
- Objective 1:** To examine the trends, patterns, and scale of female migration and the demographic and socio-economic context of female migration in Sri Lanka.
- Objective 2:** To investigate the experiences of migrant domestic workers before departure and in destination countries.
- Objective 3:** To examine demographic and socio-economic characteristics of domestic worker migrants and the determinants of migration.
- Objective 4:** To develop a theoretical framework that can incorporate gender and transnationalism to explain the impacts of the migration of Sri Lankan domestic workers on families and children left behind.
- Objective 5:** To investigate the consequences of the mothers' migration on children left behind, and how these mothers are negotiating the care work from a distance.
- Objective 6:** To investigate the family impacts of women's migration.
- Objective 7:** To examine the views of migrants and their family members on restricting female migration abroad, and to explore the options in minimising the negative effects and maximising the positive effects of female migration on families and children left behind.

1.3 Research questions

The following are the research questions that address the objectives of the study:

1. What are the trends, patterns, and scale of female migration and the demographic and socio-economic context of female migration in Sri Lanka?
2. What are the experiences of migrant domestic workers before departure and in destination countries?
3. Why do these females migrate overseas as domestic workers?
4. What are the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of females who migrate as domestic workers?
5. How could gender and transnationalism be incorporated in examining the impacts of the migration of Sri Lankan domestic workers on families and children left behind?
6. How do children benefit from the migration of their mothers?
7. What are the harmful consequences of women's migration on their children left behind?
8. How does the migration of domestic workers affect their families left behind?
9. What are the views of the migrants and community on the government's decision in banning the migration of females with young children?
10. What measures can be taken by the government to maximise the benefits and minimise the negative effects of migration?

1.4 The demographic and economic context of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has reached the final stage of the “demographic transition”⁵ due to remarkable achievements in social development, especially in the areas of health and education, and as a result of changing attitudes towards small family size, compared to other South Asian countries (UN 1976). With the dramatic changes in fertility and mortality, the population has increased from 2.4 million in 1871 to 18.7 million in 2001, and is expected to increase to 20.4 million in 2010 (Table 1.1). The average annual rate of population growth increased to 2.8 per cent between 1946 and 1953 after fluctuating during the previous seven decades. Although

⁵ The demographic transition is defined as the ‘transition from a pre-modern regime of high fertility and high mortality to a post-modern regime one in which both are low’ (Kirk 1996, p.361).

the rate of growth started to decline after 1953, it remained more than 2 per cent until 1971. Then, there has been a steady decline, and currently it stands at around 1 per cent (Table 1.1). Moreover, the sex ratio has declined from 114.3 in 1871 to 97.9 in 2001, and was projected to decline to 96.9 in 2010 (Table 1.1 and Figure 1.1).

Table 1.1 Population, average annual rate of growth, proportion of females, and sex ratio, 1871-2010

Year	Population ('000)	Average annual rate of growth	Proportion of females	Sex ratio
1871	2,400	-	46.7	114.3
1881	2,760	1.4	46.7	113.9
1891	3,007	0.9	47.0	112.7
1901	3,566	1.7	46.8	113.6
1911	4,106	1.4	47.0	112.6
1921	4,499	0.9	47.1	112.5
1931	5,307	1.7	47.0	112.7
1946	6,657	1.5	46.9	113.0
1953	8,098	2.8	47.3	111.5
1963	10,582	2.7	48.0	108.2
1971	12,690	2.2	48.5	106.1
1981	14,846	1.7	49.0	104.0
1990	17,290	1.3*	49.5	101.9
2001	18,732	1.1	50.5	97.9
2010	20,410	0.9**	50.8	96.9

Source: UN (2009), <http://esa.un.org/unpp/index.asp?panel=2>;

DC&S (2002, p.1, 1997, p.1)

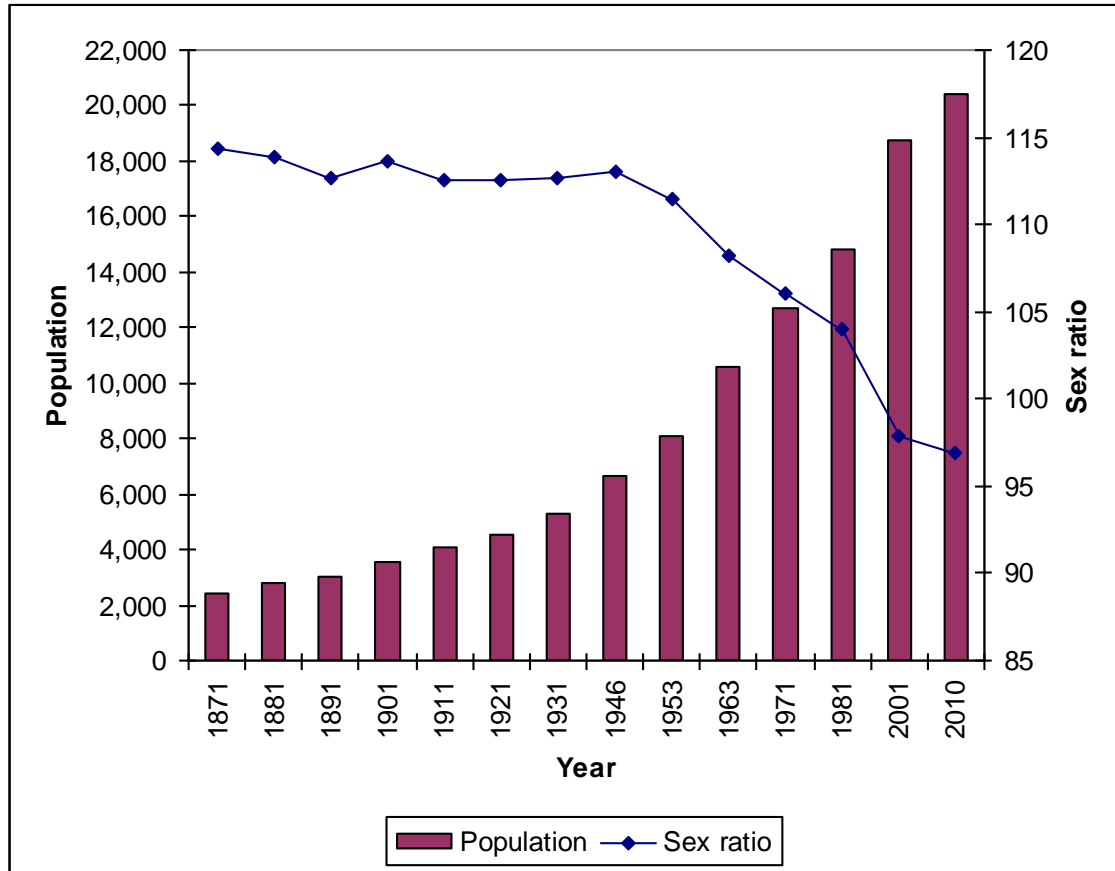
Note: * indicates that the average annual rate of population growth for the period 1985-1990

** indicates that the average annual rate of population growth for the period 2005-2010

The major contributory factor for the population increase between 1871 and 1901 was the large influx of Indian Tamil labourers to work in plantations (UN 1976). Thereafter, natural increase has become the major determinant of the population growth. The contribution of net migration to the increase in population growth has not only declined but also had a negative effect on Sri Lanka's population growth in recent years. This is because of the growing

participation of both men and women in international migration in search of employment and refugee migration since the 1960s.

Figure 1.1 Population growth and change in the sex ratio, 1871-2010



Source: UN (2009), <http://esa.un.org/unpp/index.asp?panel=2>;

DC&S (2002, p.1, and 1997, p.1)

Compared to other South Asian countries, Sri Lanka has experienced a drastic decline in fertility and an increase in life span. Table 1.2 presents Total Fertility Rates (TFR) of countries in the South Asian Region from 1970 to 2010. Sri Lanka achieved replacement level fertility by 2001 with no other South Asian country has achieving such a fertility decline by that time. Thereafter, it started to increase and currently remains at 2.3. Some of the contributory factors for the fertility decline in Sri Lanka are the increasing participation of women in economic activities, improvement in the educational attainment of females, and changing attitudes towards small family size.

Table 1.2 Changes in TFR in South Asian countries, 1970-1975 to 2005-2010

Country	1970-1975	1980-1985	1990-1995	1995-2000	2000-2005	2005-2010
Afghanistan	7.4	7.4	7.0	8.0	7.4	6.6
Bangladesh	6.4	5.3	4.3	3.8	2.8	2.4
Bhutan	5.9	5.9	5.7	5.5	3.4	2.7
India	5.4	4.5	3.7	3.3	3.1	2.8
Maldives	7.0	6.8	5.3	3.5	2.4	2.1
Nepal	5.8	5.5	5.1	4.8	3.6	2.9
Pakistan	6.3	6.2	5.8	5.5	4.4	4.0
Sri Lanka	4.1	3.4	3.4	2.1	2.3	2.3

Source: UN (2009), <http://esa.un.org/unpp/index.asp?panel=2>; De Silva (2005, p.18)

Table 1.3 shows that life expectancy at birth is far greater in Sri Lanka than elsewhere in South Asia. A significant reduction in maternal and infant mortality has resulted in a dramatic increase in the life expectancy for both sexes, especially females. Between 1920 and 1922 and in 1952, the male life expectancy at birth in Sri Lanka exceeded the life expectancy of females by about two years, and during the period 1962-1964, for the first time, the female life expectancy exceeded the male life expectancy by 0.4 years (DC&S 1991, p.7). This difference

Table 1.3 Changes in life expectancy at birth in South Asian countries by sex, 1975-1980 to 2025-2030

NOTE:
This table is included on page 10 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Source: De Silva (2005, p.20)

has increased to 4.4 years during the period 1980-1982. It was projected that the life expectancy of males will increase to 74.4 years and females to 80.3 years during the period 2025-2030 with a likely difference of 5.9 years (De Silva 2005, p.20). The dramatic decline in mortality in favour of women caused the sex ratio to reverse its direction with increasing likelihood of women outnumbering men (DC&S 1997). Consequently, the age-sex structure of population has changed with an expansion of labour force age groups.

The Sri Lankan labour force is largely made up of men. Participation of men aged 10 years and over in the labour force in 2008 was 67.9 per cent, and the participation of women was 33.2 per cent (DC&S 2009, p.vii). However, women's participation has seen a gradual and continuous increase (DC&S 2009). An estimated 21.9 per cent of the total labour force worked abroad in 2007 (SLBFE 2008, p.65), and a little more than a million of them were females and they comprised about 38 per cent of the total female labour force (DC&S 2008a, p.2). In addition to the continuous increase of females entering the labour force, there was a reduction in the female unemployment rate from 23.4 per cent in 1990 to 8.8 per cent in 2008 (DC&S 2009, p.18). Yet, the female unemployment rate remains almost double that of men.

A considerable proportion of the Sri Lankan population live in poverty⁶ although there has been noticeable economic growth and a structural change in the economy with the movement from agriculture to manufacturing and service sectors (DC&S 2009; Shaw 2008a; Gamburd 2005). The economic growth rate fluctuated between 5 and 8 per cent since the beginning of this century, and it was 6.8 per cent in 2007 (DC&S 2008b, p.55). However, as Dias and Jayasundere (2004a) explain, the rising cost of living in Sri Lanka has affected low-income groups and as a result, the gap between high-income and low-income groups has increased. Official national "Poverty line"⁷ in November 2008 was SL Rs.2919 (US \$26) and "Poverty Headcount Index"⁸ was 15.2 per cent (DC&S 2008d, p.1). According to this poverty line, about 2.8 million of the Sri Lankan population live in poverty. In addition, the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) (2007, p.1) reports that 5.6 per cent of the population receive an average

⁶ People can be classified as poor or live in poverty if they 'fall off reasonably defined minimum levels of well-being such as access to certain consumption or income levels, housing, health, and education facilities, and certain rights recognised according to the standards of human needs and socio-economic conditions of the society' (DC&S 2008c, p.1).

⁷ The poverty line in Sri Lanka is defined as 'the minimum level required acquiring by the poor to escape the poverty thereby identifying poor' (DC&S 2008b, p.1).

⁸ Poverty Headcount Index is 'the incidence of poverty as a percentage of total population' (DC&S 2008b, p.2).

income of less than US \$1 per day while 41.6 per cent receive less than US \$2 per day. Therefore, poverty alleviation has been a prime concern for the past governments, and it continues to remain a grave issue in the country (Dias and Jayasundere 2004a). Undoubtedly, poverty and unemployment of women can be considered as two important factors that have resulted in the increasing participation of women as domestic workers overseas.

Sri Lanka's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was US \$22.3 billion, and GDP per capita was US \$1,599 in 2007 (DC&S 2008b, p.55) placing Sri Lanka at the lower end of middle-income countries (Kageyama 2008). Although the average monthly household income recorded by the CBSL (2007, p.1) in the years 2006/2007 was SL Rs.26,286 (approximately US \$232) and the median was SL Rs.16,735 (approximately US \$147), female migrant domestic workers come from the families where the average monthly household income is lower than the national average monthly household income. Shaw (2008a) and Gamburd (2005) emphasise this fact indicating that female domestic workers disproportionately come from the poorer segment of the society. Each migrant woman, with their low-income, supports an average of five members of her family (Gamburd 2005; Jayaweera *et al.* 2002). It suggests that the 1,004,199 women working abroad support roughly 4,117,199 people (approximately 22 per cent of Sri Lanka's population) through their migration (SLBFE 2008, p.65).

1.5 International migration and remittances

Migrant workers' remittances have expanded in the last few decades with the increase of the departures for foreign employment, and have made direct and indirect contributions to the national and household income (Shaw 2008a; Lasagabaster *et al.* 2005; Rodrigo 1999). Shaw (2008a, p.153) points out that between 1991 and 2006, the Overseas Contract Worker⁹ (OCW) departures increased by an average of 6 per cent annually, and over the same period the contribution of formal remittances to GDP also increased from 4.0 to 9.7 per cent. With the liberalisation of economic policies since 1977, there was a transition from an export-oriented economy based on agricultural products such as tea, rubber and coconut to an industrialised economy (DC&S 2007). Moreover, as one of the national poverty alleviation policies, the government of Sri Lanka has promoted foreign employment during the last few decades

⁹ Contract migrants, otherwise termed as "guest workers", defined as 'those who cross international boundaries in securing employment with no initial intentions of permanently settling in the country of employment' (Athukorala 1990, p.323).

(Kageyama 2008; Lasagabaster *et al.* 2005). With encouraging policies that facilitate foreign employment and the increasing demand for labour within and outside Asia, the departures of OCWs have increased dramatically since the beginning of the 1980s.

There is an increasing involvement of females in overseas employment. In 2007, out of the Sri Lankan migrant population employed offshore, one million were women (SLBFE 2008, p.65). As shown in Figure 1.2, in the mid 1980s, “direct”¹⁰ and “registered”¹¹ departures for foreign employment officially fell as low as about 16,000, but they grew tenfold over the next decade (SLBFE 2009, p.3). In 2008, a little more than a quarter of a million were deployed bringing the stock of overseas contract workers to an estimated 1.8 million as mentioned earlier. This indicates that one person works overseas per 2.8 households. While in earlier years (before the 1980s), the proportion of males departed as OCWs was higher than females, for most of the last two decades two thirds or more have been women (Figure 1.2). However, by the year 2007, the percentage of women of the total OCWs has declined to 52.8 per cent due to

Figure 1.2 Departures for foreign employment by sex, 1986-2008

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 13 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Source: SLBFE (2009, p.3)

¹⁰ The number of people who have found jobs abroad on their own (SLBFE 2008, p.127).

¹¹ The number of Sri Lankans departed for foreign employment through an agency registered with SLBFE (SLBFE 2008, p.127).

the increasing employment opportunities for men in countries like Korea. It has further declined to 48.9 per cent in 2008 (SLBFE 2009, p.3). What is significant here is that male departures have again exceeded female departures in 2008 after two decades.

Official data on the outflows of migrant workers in Sri Lanka are questionable due to the practical difficulties of collecting accurate and reliable data on foreign employment (Shaw 2008a; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Soysa 1992). A survey of Shaw (2008a, p.155) in Sri Lanka reveals that around 40 per cent of the migrants had not registered at the SLBFE confirming the actual number of the migrant stock is more than the recorded figures. However, with the implementation of welfare packages for Sri Lankan employees abroad and their family members along with the compulsory registration system, illegal and undocumented migration for foreign employment declined by 10 per cent (SLBFE 2008, p.i).

Women's contribution to foreign earnings in Sri Lanka is significant. The export of plantation crops, garments, and migrant labour are the three main sources of foreign exchange earnings in Sri Lanka, and these foreign exchange earning opportunities are highly gendered with the greater involvement of women's labour (Kottegoda 2006; Gamburd 2005). Figure 1.3 indicates the significance of private remittances as a major component of foreign earnings in Sri Lanka over the years. According to this figure, the share of garment industry to the total export earnings is the highest among these three foreign earnings. The private remittances, which include the major share earned by the domestic workers, are the second highest. However, the growth of remittances has been faster than the earnings from the garment industry and plantation crops. Although the earnings from plantation crops were the major component of foreign earnings by the beginning of the 1990s, its growth has not been as significant as the growth of the garment industry and private remittances. This indicates not only the importance of private remittances but also women's contribution to the Sri Lankan economy.

With the increasing involvement of both men and women in overseas employment, remittances have increased over the years from US \$0.14 billion in 1990 (SL Rs.16,054 million) to US \$2.8 billion (SL Rs.276, 814 million) in 2008 according to the current exchange rate (SLBFE 2008, p.105). At the end of 2008, according to the World Bank (2008), together with Bangladesh (US \$9 billion), India (US \$52 billion) and Pakistan (US \$7 billion), Sri

Lanka was among the 42 largest recipients of remittances, collectively making the South Asian region the second largest regional recipient of remittances in the world after Latin America and Caribbean (Table 1.4).

Figure 1.3 The share of garments, private remittances and other earnings to the total export earnings, 1990-2008

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 15 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Source: SLBFE (2009, p.105)

Table 1.4 Migrant remittance inflows in US \$ billion, 2000-2008

Country	Year								
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Bangladesh	1.9	2.1	2.8	3.1	3.5	4.3	5.4	6.6	9.0
India	12.9	14.3	15.7	21.0	18.7	21.3	25.4	38.7	52.0
Pakistan	1.1	1.5	3.6	4.0	3.9	4.3	5.1	6.0	7.0
Sri Lanka	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.9	2.2	2.5	2.9

Source: World Bank (2008), [website www.econ.worldbank.org](http://www.econ.worldbank.org)

In terms of the reception of remittances as a percentage of GDP, Sri Lanka is ranked 30th in 2007 (World Bank 2008). The major part of these remittances of Sri Lankan workers comes

from unskilled workers and domestic workers in the Middle East (Kageyama 2008; Lasagabaster *et al.* 2005; Athukorala 1990). This implies that the contribution of females, especially as domestic workers, to the total remittances is substantial. In addition to their contribution to the country's economy, overseas labour markets are a 'politically important safety valve for pressures from poverty and unemployment' (Shaw 2008a, p.153). Although the Sri Lankan labour force, especially the female labour force, has grown rapidly in the last few decades, the Sri Lankan economy has been unable to generate sufficient jobs to accommodate this growing female labour force (Lasagabaster *et al.* 2005; Gamburd 2000). Consequently, the opening up of employment opportunities for women in the labour markets of the Middle East and Newly Industrialised Economies (NIEs) such as Singapore, Malaysia and Korea has had helped these women to find jobs overseas (Shaw 2008a). The changing role of women as economic actors and the recognition of the importance of their remittances to the country's economy and to the migrants' households have received growing attention of scholars.

1.6 Increasing scholarly attention towards the international mobility of women working overseas

In the past, international migration as a component of population change did not attract the attention of researchers and policymakers as much as the other two components: fertility and mortality. The initiation of the demographic transition has dramatically influenced the economic and social development of countries through the changes in the age-sex structures of populations. These changes took place in countries in different times at different paces, and therefore, the issues related to fertility and mortality were the focus of policy makers and researchers. Nevertheless, with an unprecedented increase in the scale and complexity of mobility within and between countries both as a cause and consequence of economic and social changes, internal and international migration have drawn the growing attention of researchers and policy makers.

The differences in fertility and mortality levels between developed and developing countries have resulted in differences in the rates of population growth between them. These differences have become one of the key drivers of labour migration from developing countries to developed countries (Sumulong and Zhai 2008). The demographic transition, which started

first in developed countries, led to the changes in the age-sex structure of their populations, especially to the decline in the labour force. In contrast, most of the developing countries in Asia have experienced a rapidly growing labour force. As Sumulong and Zhai (2008, p.83) report, over the period 1995–2005, the labour force in developing Asia grew at an annual rate of 1.6 per cent. According to them, in some labour sending countries like Bangladesh, Cambodia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam, the labour force growth rate exceeded 2 per cent a year in the last decade. In addition to the population entering the labour force, these countries have experienced an increase in unemployment especially of females. These demographic changes coupled with a variety of other factors such as push factors at origin, pull factors at destination, the disparities in wages between labour sending and receiving countries, structural changes in the economies of labour sending and receiving countries, globalisation, and changes in international migration policies have resulted in a rapid growth of labour migration from Asia. Consequently, labour migration in Asia has received increasing attention since the second half of the twentieth century (Sumulong and Zhai 2008; Hugo 2005a; Asis 2004a; Wickramasekera 2002).

1.6.1 International labour migration and the Asian region

Over the past four decades the total number of international migrants have more than doubled while the percentage of the world population migrating has remained fairly constant (International Organisation for Migration (IOM) 2007, p.1; UNFPA 2006, p.1; Jolly and Reeves 2005, p.1; UN 2005, p.1; Skeldon 2003a, p.2). Available estimates show that there are currently about 192 million people living outside their places of birth, which is about 3 per cent of the world's population (IOM 2007, p.1; UNFPA 2006, p.1). This means that roughly one of every 35 persons in the world is a migrant (Shamim 2006, p.160). Twenty five per cent of the world migrants are in Asia (Ghosh 2009, p.3; Jolly and Reeves 2005, p.6). As several scholars argue (for example, Sumulong and Zhai 2008; Shamim 2006; Hugo 2005a; Piper 2005), these official migrant stock numbers are likely to be underestimated as they exclude much temporary and undocumented migration. According to them, most labour migrants in Asia are temporary and often need to return home at the end of their contracts, and therefore, there are possibilities of the exclusion of them from the migration data collection systems.

With the continuing demographic and economic changes in developed and developing countries, labour migration is likely to increase in the future (Sumulong and Zhai 2008; Piper

2005). Moreover, “globalisation”¹² and its forces including policies, acting as push and pull factors, have resulted in a substantial increase in the mobility of both male and female workers across borders (Piper 2005; Wickramasekera 2002). These forces have made it easy for people to move across borders by providing them with the following facilities (International Labour Office (ILO) 2007; UNFPA and International Migration Policy Programme (IMPP) 1994):

- easy access to information about opportunities abroad;
- low cost travel and quick communication with family members through vast improvements in communications technology;
- dissemination of information through mass media; and
- improved transportation.

Globalisation has opened up a range of new economic opportunities for women in many countries within and outside Asia (UNFPA 2006; UN 2005; Wickramasekera 2002) by increasing or decreasing migration pressures on labour sending countries (Wickramasekera 2002). Wickramasekera (2002) shows that in some labour sending countries, globalisation increases migration because of the disparities of employment opportunities, wages and living standards between the labour sending and receiving countries. In other labour sending countries, the creation of more employment opportunities through the country’s economic development and increased investments by multinationals tend to reduce out-migration pressures. Accordingly, international migration has become one of the options for women to improve their economic and social conditions in countries where the effects of globalisation have increased poverty and limited economic and social opportunities for women (UN 2005). As a result of limited economic and social opportunities for women in the countries of origin and the availability of these opportunities in other countries, women are on the move today in all parts of the world than ever before (UNFPA 2006; Jolly and Reeves 2005; Piper 2005; Jolly *et al.* 2003; Zlotnik 2003).

The number of women in the world migrant stock has increased from 35 million in 1960 to 95 million in 2005 (UNFPA 2006, p.1; UNFPA- IOM 2006, p.1; Jolly and Reeves 2005, p.5; Piper 2005, p.3; UN 2005, p.3). ‘Despite the common misconception that men are the

¹² Globalisation is defined as ‘a process through which interdependence and inter connectedness among societies becomes further extended and intensified on a worldwide scale’ (Gills and Piper 2002, p.14).

migrants' (Jolly and Reeves 2005, p.1), these women mostly migrate on their own and not as family members (ILO 2006; UN 2005). Table 1.5 shows that women make up nearly half of all migrants, and over the past 40 years, the number of female migrants has risen steadily. Female migrants have been better represented in more developed regions while its share has increased from 47.9 per cent in 1960 to 52.5 per cent in 2005 outnumbering male migrants by the year 1990. In less developed countries, female migrants constituted about 46 per cent of all migrants and that proportion has remained relatively stable since 1960. In addition to the levels of international migration, there has been a diversification of migration streams and changes in the causes and consequences of migration at the family level.

Table 1.5 Percentage distribution of female migrants to the total international migrants by area, 1960 - 2005

Major area	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005
World	46.6	47.2	47.4	47.9	48.8	49.6
More developed region	47.9	48.2	49.4	50.8	50.9	52.5
Less developed region	45.7	46.3	45.5	44.7	46.0	46.0

Source: UN (2006, p.5); Piper (2005, p.3)

Migration across borders in search of employment has occurred all through the history, and therefore, it is not a new phenomenon in the Asian region (Semyonov and Gorodzeisky 2005). What is new is the increasing involvement of women in migration in search of better employment opportunities and higher wages that has begun in recent decades (Semyonov and Gorodzeisky 2005; Eelens and Speckmann 1990; Zlotnik 1990). However, it has become a fast growing phenomenon and will continue in the future because of widening income disparities between developed and developing countries, declining workforces in the more developed regions due to low fertility and the changing values and attitudes to work, especially among women (Sumulong and Zhai 2008; Abella 2005). With the increase in labour migration and its developmental significance, investigations on such migrations have grown in numbers.

The growing literature on labour migration has clearly indicated that the flows of labour migration are mostly in one direction - from the developing countries to the developed countries (Hugo 2005b, 2002). In other words, as Semyonov and Gorodzeisky (2005) show,

individuals migrate from the countries where capital is scarce and labour is abundant to the countries where capital is abundant and labour is scarce. Consequently, the migration flows have increased throughout the Asian region. In the early years of migration research in the Asian region, scholars focused on analysing the levels, trends, patterns, and nature of migration, and these analyses were predominantly quantitative. They mainly used primary data obtained from censuses, surveys, and other sources in their analyses. Consequently, a large number of studies have investigated the levels, trends and patterns of labour migration in the Asian Region as a whole, by sub-regions and individual countries. For example:

- Asis (2005a) examines recent trends in international migration in Asia and the Pacific;
- Hugo (2004) investigates international migration in Southeast Asia since World War II;
- Haque (2005) examines migration trends and patterns in South Asia with special focus on management approaches and initiatives; and
- Rajan (2003) explores the dynamics of international migration from India.

In these investigations, levels, trends, and patterns of migration in relation to a range of different aspects have been discussed. While some researchers have examined the levels, patterns, and trends of migration, some others investigated migration in relation to the development process. For example, Hugo (2007, 2003) examines migration and development, especially in terms of maximising redistribution of wealth from North to South through migration, and the UN (2005) investigates the role of women in development, especially in poverty reduction. In addition, Jolly and Reeves (2005) and Piper (2005) investigate gender and migration in relation to development. However, a major portion of the investigations on migration and development has focused on the areas of Asia, which are large senders or receivers of migrants. While some studies have focused on sub-regions in Asia, some others have focused on different countries.

The attention of scholars has increasingly focused on the contribution of migration to economic and social development and poverty alleviation in poor countries. Hugo (2007) finds that it is important to examine the trends relating to the scale and complexity of migration from low-income countries to high-income countries, its developmental impacts, and the

policies and programmes that can be used to increase the positive impacts. In addition, Hugo (2003) explains, citing examples from the Asian region, how migrant sending countries benefit from the remittances of permanent and temporary labour migration. However, as Hugo (2003) notes the role of remittances in the redistribution of wealth between different nations is partly understood. Elaborating this idea he explains how several Asian countries have been able to mobilise their diasporas to benefit the development of their countries of origin while emphasising the complex two-way relationship that exist between migration and development in both countries of origin and destination.

Sumulong and Zhai (2008) review migration trends and the directions, examine causes of international migration, and explore the possibilities of the expansion of intra-regional labour migration flows in the Asian region. Corresponding to migration trends in Asia, Battistella (2003) identifies some key observations such as the increasing trend of labour migration and the increasing proportion of women in labour migration. Managing labour migration in the Asian region is another area of concern. Haque (2005) recognises the need for collaborative and comprehensive initiatives in managing migration in the region making migration beneficial for both migrants and sending as well as receiving countries. Abella (2005) points out the influences of international labour migration on the Asian region communities with changing policy focus towards the identification of ways that make migration a force for long-term growth and development.

With the recognition of the increasing trend of female migration and the developmental impacts of their migration on the countries of origin and families and children left behind, several researchers in the Asian region have initiated investigations relating to the divergent aspects of female labour migration. The focus of most researchers on female migration in Asia has been on the Southeast Asia region, especially the Philippines, one of the major suppliers of female labour. The other countries of interest have been Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand. As Asis (2005a) explains, South Asia has received some academic attention although it is less than the attention that has received by Southeast Asia. According to Asis (2005a), among the South Asian countries, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh have received more scholarly attention than the other countries in the region.

1.6.2 Increasing female labour migration from Asia

The migration of Asian workers to the Middle East since the 1970s and to the NIEs since the 1980s and the “feminisation of migration”¹³, a trend that began in the early 1980s, brought international migration to the attention of researchers and policy makers (UNFPA-IOM 2006; Abella 2005; Asis 2005a; Hugo 2005a; Athukorala 1990). With the economic development accompanied by the 1973 oil price increase, Middle East countries have modernised their economies. As Lim and Abella (1994) argue, these countries could not have done their infrastructure development at such a pace without importing workers from other countries. One of the outcomes of this oil crisis was the increasing outflows of Asian workers to the Middle East countries (Lim and Abella 1994). Moreover, with the increasing demand for labour in these countries, Asia is seen as a region of rapid growth of low skilled and semi skilled contract labour migrants (Hugo 2005b), and the migration flows from Asia has increased its scale and complexity (Hugo 2005b; IOM 2005; Wickramasekera 2002).

As Asis (2004a) explains, initially, South Asian countries of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh provided labour to the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) - Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates (UAE). Thereafter, Southeast countries of Thailand and the Philippines joined the flow. According to Asis (2004a), Sri Lanka and Indonesia joined this migration flow a little later. However, thereafter, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia have become the major suppliers of domestic workers (Asis 2004a; Chammartin 2004b). Because of the subsequent decline in oil prices, the Gulf war and the completion of many construction projects since the mid 1980s, there was a sharp fall in the demand for migrant labour. However, according to Chammartin (2004b), it turned out to be temporary and had little impact on the demand for females. With the emergence of NIEs in East and Southeast Asia during the last few decades, the numbers of destinations of Asian migrant workers have been expanded (Asis 2005a, 2004a; Hugo 2005a; Skeldon 2003a).

With these changes in the economies of labour importing countries, women have become more significant in the migration flows with many moving into domestic and care work (Hugo 2005a; Asis *et al.* 2004). Consequently, the feminisation of migration has become one of the most distinctive features of the massive expansion of international migration in Asia over the

¹³ Feminisation of migration is defined as ‘the rising number of independently migrating women in the migration streams’ (Piper 2005, p.5).

last two decades (Hugo 2005a; Wickramasekera 2002; Sassen 2001), and has resulted in the increase of women who migrate alone, especially as contract workers. However, these countries keep low and semi-skilled migration as only temporary (Chammartin 2005; Asis *et al.* 2004), and family members are not allowed to join the workers (Asis 2004a; Athukorala 1990). Accordingly, females migrate as domestic and care workers leaving their families and children at home.

Labour migration in Asia is feminised (Piper 2005; Tyner 2002). The proportions of female workers of some selected Asian out-migration countries who respond to this demand are shown in Table 1.6. While Asian countries vary in the extent, to which women are represented in labour migration streams, the three countries: the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka comprise some 48-69 per cent of workers legally deployed (Table 1.6). The Filipino migration is relatively gender equitable as both men and women are equally likely to migrate, and it has currently surpassed Mexico the world's largest labour exporting country (Piper 2008). Labour migration from Indonesia is highly feminised because over two thirds of its migrants are females. South Asia is recognised mainly as a labour exporting region where women's migration is subject to some restriction with a notable exception of Sri Lanka (Piper 2008). Although Bangladesh and Nepal provide large numbers of labour migrants, the female proportion is comparatively insignificant (Dannecker 2008) presumably due to a ban on

Table 1.6 Proportion of female international migrants in selected Asian out-migration countries

NOTE:
This table is included on page 23 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Source: Ukwatta and Hugo (2009, p.6)

women's migration. Table 1.6 shows that in Thailand, Bangladesh and Vietnam, the percentages of female migrants are insignificant compared to the high percentage of women in the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

Asian women today tend to migrate more independently to meet their economic demands (UNFPA-IOM 2006). Thus, 'female migration has become an element of a family survival strategy, gender equality, and an element for modifying gender roles and women's status' (Sassen 2001, p.101). Female migrants face different challenges at different stages of the migration process than male migrants (Piper 2005). However, they contribute to the development of their countries, to their own, and to their families with the money they accrued, and new skills and economic and decision-making power acquired during working overseas (UNFPA-IOM 2006; UNFPA 2006). When they return to their country of origin after several years of working abroad, they encounter new ways of life, may face new social challenges, and have to adjust to their societies and families as they belong to two countries, two families and two cultures simultaneously during the period they work overseas (UNFPA 2006). However, for many women, 'migration opens doors to a new world of greater equality, relief from oppression, and the discrimination that limits freedom and stunts potential' (UNFPA 2006, p.1).

According to the literature review, changing focus in research interest reflects several important developments in studies of female migration:

- feminisation of migration (for example, UNFPA 2006; UNFPA and IOM 2006; Piper 2005; Chammartin 2004b; Zlotnik 2003);
- a gendered phenomenon of international migration (for example, Jolly and Reeves 2005; Piper 2005; Jolly *et al.* 2003; Pesser and Mahler 2003);
- perception of women as an agent of development (UN 2005; Chammartin 2004b; Chant and Radcliffe 1992);
- perception of women as breadwinners rather than housewives (Gamburd 2005; Lan 2003; Sassen 2001); and
- increasing recognition of the family as a unit of analysis in relation to women's migration (for example, Save the Children 2006; Gamburd 2005, 2000; Hugo 2002, 1994).

Moreover, domestic worker migration has become a major concern in international migration literature since they are perceived as contributors to the economic growth of the countries of origin and household economy, a vulnerable group among the other migrants, and due to the social costs that they bring to their families left behind despite the economic benefits.

1.6.3 Domestic workers in international migration

Domestic worker migrants run two households simultaneously: their employers' household and their own (UNFPA 2006). While male migrants respond to the demand of labour in the 'formal/productive' sector, females respond to the labour needs of the 'informal/reproductive' sector (Asis 2004a, p. 20). Women migrants fill 'a very specific labour niche in the countries of destination, care giving or reproductive work' (Asis 2004b, p.6). In other words, key characteristic of female labour migration in Asia is much more concentrated in a small number of occupations mainly as domestic and care workers, and in some instances and to a lesser extent in garment industry (Asis 2005a; Jolly and Reeves 2005; Piper 2005). Currently, domestic work is recognised as one of the largest sectors of international female labour migration (Ghosh 2009; UNFPA 2006; Yeoh *et al.* 2005a). It 'has come to be primarily, and sometimes solely, associated with women's work' (Yeoh *et al.* 2005a, p.1), and 'it remains a highly stigmatised local occupation in many societies' (Yeoh *et al.* 2005a, p.2). In examining the gender perspective of migration, Chammartin (2004b, p.15) views female labour migration to the Gulf countries and to Jordan and Lebanon as 'the single most important category of employment'. Furthermore, Chammartin (2004a) reports that domestic work is the only occupation that requires legal protection in the receiving countries. According to Chammartin (2004a), these countries receive thousands of women migrants for domestic work every year and their numbers are increasing when compared to the numbers of male migrants. However, in Sri Lanka, domestic worker migration flows to the oil rich countries of West Asia has become more significant than the flows to NIEs and other developed countries.

Domestic workers belong to one of the vulnerable groups among migrants (Save the Children 2006; Gamburd 2005; Piper 2005; Chammartin 2004a; Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004; Abu-Habib 1998). The extent of their vulnerability is demonstrated in the following quote of Piper (2005, p.8):

The most widespread problems with domestic work are the low pay and long working hours, the inferior positions of domestic workers and highly personalised relationships with employers, which make it difficult for workers to receive their agreed pay or get time off. The health and safety situation in the home is not satisfactory, and if they are ill, they do not get paid and may even lose their jobs. Psychological, physical and sexual abuses are common. Domestic worker is not considered as a competitor in employment market which is a sector shunned by local women because of its social stigma.

Migrant women's vulnerability include poor working conditions, low earnings, longer working hours, lack of freedom, lack of communication skills, and verbal and physical abuse (Hugo 2005c; Piper 2005; Chammartin 2004a; Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004; Abu-Habib 1998). Chammartin (2004a) explains that since these women work within the household, it is difficult to supervise their conditions by labour inspectors. Moreover, the labour laws of many Arab countries do not cover them (Chammartin 2004a). Jureidini and Moukarbel (2004) argue that most of the Sri Lankan domestic workers overseas face many problems such as the lack of freedom, contract debts in Sri Lanka, which these women have to pay during the first few months of work overseas, illiteracy of work contract, and the exploitation of work. They further emphasise that the status of Sri Lankan domestic workers in Lebanon is low and fall under the category of "contract slavery"¹⁴ compared with women from the Philippines who receive higher wages.

However, Sri Lankan domestic workers overseas are the principal income earners for their low-income households (Kottegoda 2006; Gamburd 2000). Kottegoda (2006) points out that because of the problematic nature of their migration, their economic contribution to the families and to the country is not acknowledged by the public (Kottegoda 2006). Parrenas (2001a) explains that the families in the destination countries that employ female domestic workers and families in the origin that send females to work overseas have different needs. In the destination countries, there is a shortage of caregivers while in the origin countries there is a labour surplus. Families who have female members with no employment or receive less money respond to the overseas demand by sending their female members. In this process, according to the definition of "global care chain"¹⁵, women in high-income families pass the responsibilities of childcare to women migrants, and in turn, women migrants pass them to

¹⁴ Jureidini and Moukarbel (2004, p.582) used the concept "contract slavery" to describe the working conditions and arrangements of Sri Lankan female domestic workers in Lebanon.

¹⁵ The term "global care chain" was first used by Hochschild (2000a, p.131) to refer to a 'series of personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring'.

other family members at home (Parrenas 2001a). Consequently, in Sri Lanka, there is a shift of care work from the household to the market, especially to the international market as Parrenas (2001a) explains. It has strengthened in recent decades for several reasons: global economic restructuring, economic liberalisation policies since the 1970s, increasing labour force participation of women, increasing job opportunities for women in Free Trade Zones in Sri Lanka, and the increasing demand for female labour overseas. However, this increasing participation of Sri Lankan females in the international paid labour market may result in a care deficit among their own families or the families that require domestic assistants for pay. Having reviewed some of the existing empirical evidence that discusses the international labour migration of women in the Asian context, the next section examines more closely the particular case of Sri Lanka, so that a more profound understanding of inadequacy of research in relation to the topic can be gained.

1.7 The study of the families and children left behind by Sri Lankan migrant domestic workers

There is a growing focus of scholars on the impacts of women's migration on families and children left behind in the Asian region (for example, Huang *et al.* 2008; Lauser 2008; Agrawal 2006; Eversole 2006; Zimmerman 2006; Huang *et al.* 2005; Hugo 2005c; Asis *et al.* 2004; Zlotnik 2003; Parrenas 2001a; Gamburd 2000; Battistella and Conaco 1996). This is also reflected in the international migration literature in Sri Lanka during the last two decades as several studies have focussed on the consequences of women's migration on families and children left behind (for example, Save the Children 2006; Gamburd 2000; Hettige 1999; Ratnayake 1999; Rodrigo 1999; Eelens 1995). According to Piper (2005), the impacts of migration on families and children left behind are different in relation to the person who migrates - male or female, or domestic worker or other migrant women. The investigation of economic and social impacts of the migration of Sri Lankan domestic workers on the families and children has become important due to several reasons:

1. Increasing recognition of migration as a gendered phenomenon; hence the patterns, causes, and consequences of female migration and its policy implications may differ from those of men (Ghosh 2009; Dannecker 2008; De Silva 2006; Hugo 2006;

- Zimmerman 2006; Piper 2005; Parrenas 2005a; Sorensen 2005; Jolly *et al.* 2003; Pesser and Mahler 2003; Sakka *et al.* 1999);
2. Increasing scale and complexity of female migration as domestic workers overseas (Silvey 2006; Asis 2005b; Gamburd 2005; Hugo 2005c; ILO 2004; Huang *et al.* 2003; Moors 2003);
 3. Increasing recognition of the family as a unit of analysis in the international migration of females (Silvey 2006; Huang *et al.* 2003; Asis 2002, 2000; Hugo 2002, 1994; Tyner 2002; Zlotnik 1995);
 4. Increasing number of transnational families with absent mothers for a significant part of the growing up of their children (Ukwatta and Hugo 2009; Yeoh and Lam 2007; Save the Children 2006; Huguet and Punpuing 2005; Yeates 2005; Asis *et al.* 2004; Hugo 2002; Parrenas 2002, 2001a; Hochschild 2000b; Hadi 1999; Battistella and Conaco 1998, 1996);
 5. Recognition of the economic and social impacts of women's migration on migrants, their families, and children left behind (Toyota *et al.* 2007; Gamburd 2005, 2000; Parrenas 2005a, 2005b, 2002; Piper 2005; Wahyuni 2005; Yamannaka 2005; Hochschild 2002; Hettige 1999; Ratnayake 1999; Sakka *et al.* 1999; Fernando 1989);
 6. Gaps in evidence in relation to the topic compared to the countries that are the major suppliers of domestic workers in Asia (for example, the Philippines), and the inadequate attention given to the family as a unit of investigation (Ratnayake 1999; Hugo 1994);
 7. Exposure of women to new vulnerabilities as a result of abusive working conditions, long-term separation from their families and social isolation and exclusion. (Piper 2005; Jolly and Reeves 2005; Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004; Hadi 1999; Abu-Habib 1998; Cumarnatunga 1990); and
 8. Increasing attention on transnational of migration (Huang *et al.* 2008; Levitt and Jarworsky 2007; Yeoh *et al.* 2005a, 2005b; Levitt *et al.* 2003; Pesser and Mahler 2003; Bryceson and Vuorela 2002).

It is impossible to ignore the importance of migration of women to work overseas since their remittances make a valuable contribution to the Sri Lanka's economy as mentioned earlier (SLBFE 2009; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a). According to the government of Sri Lanka,

overseas remittances have become the backbone of the country's economy (*Asian Migration News*, 31 August 2001 as cited in Hugo 2005b). However, despite the economic benefits that migration seems to provide to the country, women's migration can have both positive and negative impacts on families and children (Save the Children 2006; Gamburd 2005; Ratnayake 1999; Fernando 1989).

There is a growing recognition that migration is an essential and inevitable component of the economic and social life of every nation (IOM 2007). Migrant domestic worker women provide not only economic benefits to their families but also social benefits including improved education and health of their children and skill development of their own (Afsar 2005; Asis 2005b; Gamburd 2005, 2000; Hadi 1999). However, they have little recognition in both receiving and sending countries. UNFPA (2006) also highlights both positive and negative aspects of the migration of these women. According to UNFPA (2006, p.25):

for millions of women and their families, a global care chain offers considerable benefits, albeit with some serious drawbacks such as the separation from their children and other loved ones at home.

Women usually use their money earned overseas in meeting daily needs, improving the living condition of families, especially the education and health of children. In other words, according to UNFPA (2006, p.1), money earned by women migrants most often 'go to fill hungry bellies, clothe and educate children, provide health care, and generally to improve living standards for loved ones left behind'. Moreover, women are the major physical and emotional supporters for their family members, especially for their children (UNFPA-IOM 2006). According to Hochschild (2002), when mothers migrate, both mothers and children can suffer. As much as these women suffer, children can suffer more (Hochschild 2002). In addition to the suffering of these women due to the separation from their families, they are often burdened with family responsibilities. Regardless of their suffering, migrant women often have little choice but to leave loved ones behind, as they need money to support their families.

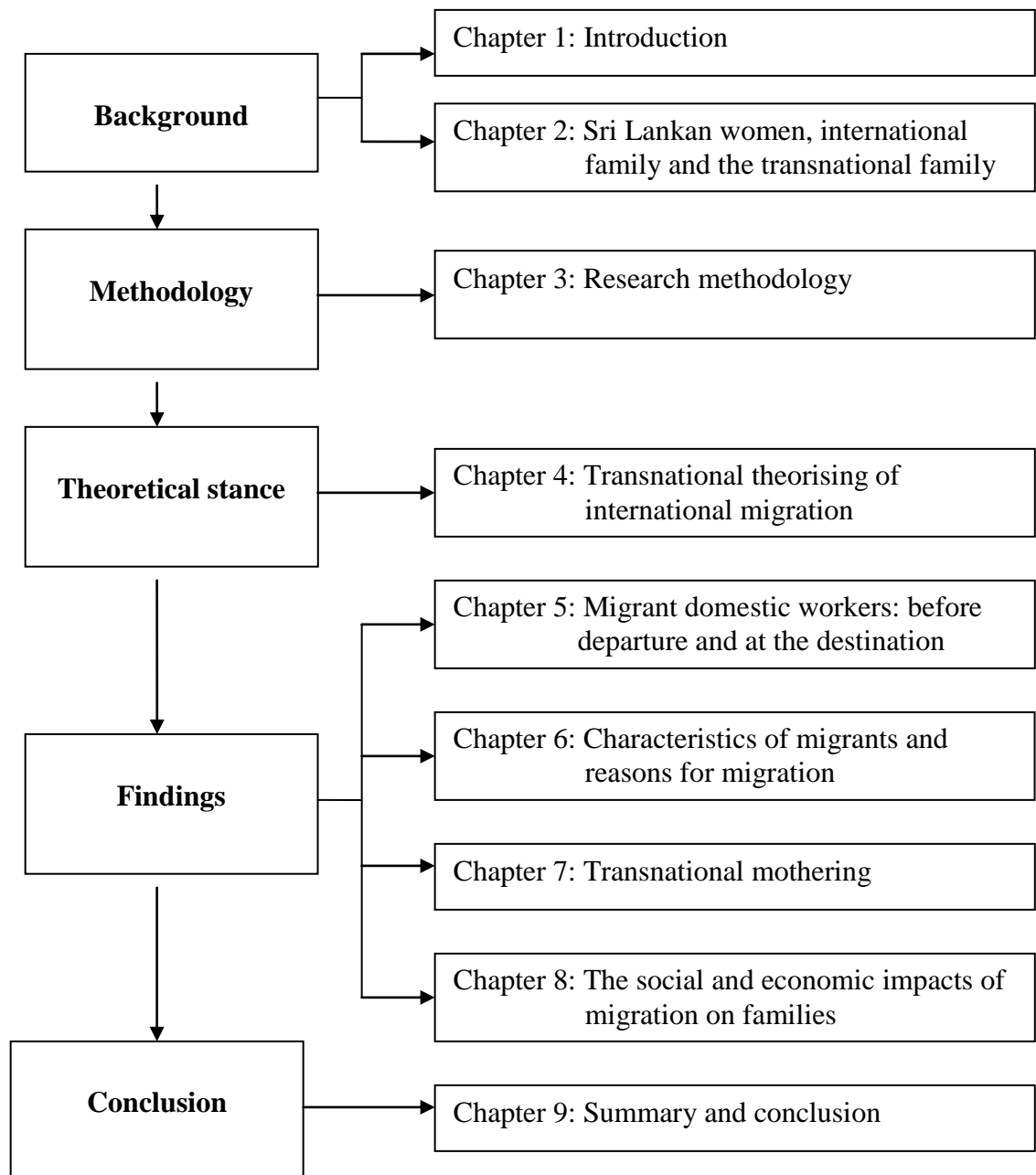
What is important to know is how far we have come and how far still we have to go in migration research. Reported studies on Sri Lankan international labour migration can be identified as of two dominant types: national level and household level. National level studies include overviews of levels and trends of migration (Gunatilleke and Perera 1995), migration

and development (Sriskandarajah 2002), remittances at aggregate level (Kageyama 2008; Lasagabaster *et al.* 2005; Gunatilleke 1998), and the descriptions of policies and programme activities of governments to organise and regulate worker migration (Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Perera 1993). Among the household level studies, some studies have focused on the migration of both men and women, for example, Shaw (2008a) examines the role of remittances in the household economy, Eelens (1995) investigates the family impacts of migration, and Rodrigo (1999) examines the causes and consequence of migration. Some others explore the economic and social impacts of women's migration on families and children left behind (Save the Children 2006; Ratnayake 1999). The focus of the study of Save the Children (2006) is on children while Ratnayake's study is limited to few aspects of women's migration. Fewer studies examine the psychological and sociological aspect of female migration (De Silva 2006; Fernando 1989) and the problems faced by the migrant women abroad, and the legal and administrative arrangements for these workers at the country of origin and destination (Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004; and Abu-Habib 1998).

This study is distinctive because none of the previous research (for example, Save the children 2006; Gamburd 2005, 2003, 2000; Hettige 1999; Ratnayake 1999; Fernando 1989) has examined the family impacts of female migration in detail, especially the economic and social impacts of migration of domestic workers on both families and children left behind. Migration is an adaptive mechanism, which in turn produces changes in the family, and therefore, this study focuses on an area yet to be researched. It is hoped that deeper understanding of both the positive and negative impacts of women's migration on families and children will be developed through providing detailed information by this study. While adding new knowledge to the body of existing knowledge of the issue and filling a gap in migration research, the study will bring conclusions and observations for a timely issue in which policy makers need more information.

1.8 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis consists of nine chapters as shown in Figure 1.4. The background for the thesis is provided in two chapters. Building a foundation for the study, this chapter has presented the objectives of the study and research questions that addressed in fulfilling the objectives. It has further provided a comprehensive review on the importance of migrants' remittances in the development of the migrants' household and the country's economy. In

Figure 1.4 Chapter outline of the thesis

addition, the chapter has explained how scholarly attention has moved from the examination of patterns and trends of international migration towards the investigation of more complex issues such as gendered and transnational migration in the Asian region with special focus on the migration of Sri Lankan domestic workers overseas. This discussion has further illustrated

the significance of the study. Chapter 2, the next chapter of the thesis, presents an overview of the out-migration of Sri Lankan females, especially the domestic workers, with a brief description of the improvement of socio-economic status of women. Finally, it briefly explains the transformations of the family in Sri Lanka.

Chapter 3 provides a broad picture of the research process. The methodological approach used in the study and the justification for the use of it and data collection and analysis procedures are described here. The transnational theorising of migration is detailed in Chapter 4. It reviews traditional theories of international migration and discusses how gender and transnationalism could be incorporated in migration theories. In addition, it presents a theoretical framework for the explanation of the migration process of Sri Lankan domestic workers.

Findings of the study are provided in three chapters. Chapter 5 is about the migration process. The discussion of this chapter integrates some of the findings of the study in relation to the pre-departure stage of migration and at the destination and the findings of some other studies of female migration in Sri Lanka. Socio-economic context of the study area, characteristics of domestic worker migrants and their families, and the determinants of migration are discussed in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 appraises the consequences of mothers' migration on children left behind and migrant's negotiations to maintain a sense of family across transnational space in mothering their children. Chapter 8 explains the economic and social impacts of migration on families left behind in relation to family well-being and weakening.

Chapter 9, the last chapter of the thesis, provides a conclusion with a summary of findings. Moreover, it suggests measures to maximise the benefits of remittances (both monetary and non-monetary) for recipients' households and minimise the negative effects of migration along with suggestions for further research. Traditional role of Sri Lankan women, improvement in their socio-economic status, increasing trend of female migration, and the transformation of the family in Sri Lanka are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

SRI LANKAN WOMEN, INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION, AND THE TRANSNATIONAL FAMILY

Migration can be beneficial, both for women and for the countries, which send and receive them. Women migrants make a significant economic contribution through their labour, both to their countries of destination and, through remittances, to their countries of origin. Beyond their economic contribution, women migrants are a main source of physical and emotional support for older and younger family members.

(UNFPA-IOM 2006, p.3)

2.1 Introduction

The socio-economic status of Sri Lankan women has improved over the past few decades (DC&S 2007; Ukwatta 2005). Internal and international mobility for employment has also increased enhancing the ability of women in providing significant economic contributions to the country and their families (SLBFE 2009; Shaw 2008a; Ukwatta 2005). Consequently, the traditional role of women has changed noticeably over the years (De Silva 2006; Hewamanne and Muller n.d.). In addition, there have been transformations in the Sri Lankan family in terms of its size, type (extended or nuclear), nature, and functioning (Abeykoon 2008; De Silva 2006; Kottegoda 2006). However, increasing numbers of women who have entered the international labour market as domestic workers are from low-income families and have low levels of education (SLBFE 2009; Shaw 2008a; Gamburd 2005; Al-Najjir 2004; Chammartin 2004b). This chapter begins with an outline of the different types of labour migration flows followed by a discussion of the changes in the traditional role of Sri Lankan women. The changing socio-economic status of women is then explained to highlight its contribution to the changes in their traditional roles. Next, Sri Lankan domestic worker migration is discussed. Finally, the chapter presents a brief account of the transformation of the family.

2.2 International migration flows

Sri Lanka has long established international labour migration flows dating back to the colonial period. Sri Lankan migration scholars (for example, Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Ratnayake 1999; Gunatilleke 1998; Eelens 1995) have recognised four distinct labour migration flows that have originated since the colonial period. First, at the beginning of the twentieth century and during the colonial period under the British rule, there was a labour migration flow of Sri

Lankan Tamils to Malaysia, which was very small. Second, immediately after independence, a small number of Sri Lankans migrated to Singapore and Hong Kong. Thereafter, out-migration of labour was insignificant until the 1960s. Third, in the 1960s, distinct migration flows of academically and professionally qualified persons originated from Sri Lanka mainly moving to countries like Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom and to a lesser extent to New Zealand and the United States (Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Ratnayake 1999; Gunatilleke 1998; Eelens 1995). The emergence of this migration flow was a result of a combination of factors:

- demand for qualified labour in the developed countries;
- the slow growth of the domestic economy and the inability to offer higher salaries to academically and professionally qualified persons; and
- the problem of unemployment in Sri Lanka.

Fourth, from the mid 1970s, there have been new migration flows that are largely temporary and mainly directed towards the Middle East, NIEs in Southeast Asia, and some other developed countries (Pham and Harrod 2008; Gamburd 2005, 2003; Ratnayake 1999; Eelens 1995).

There are clear differences between these labour migration flows in terms of skill composition, status (whether it is permanent or temporary), the direction of migration, and the jobs they were seeking to find abroad (Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Gunatilleke 1998; Eelens 1995). Persons who migrated to Malaysia, Singapore, and Hong Kong before the 1960s were less skilled, and some of them migrated as plantation workers. In contrast, the persons who have migrated permanently to countries such as Australia, United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand are professionally qualified have migrated with their families (Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Ratnayake 1999; and Soysa 1992). Persons who have migrated to seek employment in the Middle East and NIEs countries since the 1970s are mostly semi skilled and unskilled, and migrated as individuals on a contract basis (SLBFE 2009; Pham and Harrod 2008). A significant feature of these migration flows to the Middle East and NIEs is the greater involvement of females as domestic workers. Moreover, these migrants are only allowed to stay in the country of work for a period given in the work contract, and family members are

not permitted to unite with the workers who are required to return after the contract is over (Aris 2004a; Athukorala 1990).

Although the economic slowdown of the oil producing countries of the Middle East that occurred in the 1980s resulted in reducing the demand for Sri Lankan male workers, the demand for domestic workers was not greatly affected. Instead, the migration of women has continued to increase. There are several reasons for this steady increase of Sri Lankan female migration for work in these countries (Sumulong and Zhai 2008; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Chammartin 2004a; Eelens 1995):

- the affordability of employing a domestic worker from abroad whose salaries tend to be low even among low-income families in the Middle East;
- the freedom of women in destination countries to devote their time to household activities with the availability of a domestic worker;
- improvement in the social status of women in labour importing families;
- the high unemployment rate of women and the lack of employment opportunities for women with less skills in Sri Lanka; and
- the increasing participation of women in the labour market in both Sri Lanka and destination countries.

In addition, participants of the Focus Group Discussions (FGD) of this study reported that the recruiting agencies charge lower recruiting fees for women than their male counterparts. As a result, it is more likely that a female member of low-income families will have more inclination to migrate than a male member of the family. Moreover, the improvements in the demographic and socio-economic status of women in Sri Lanka have motivated them to find employment opportunities in the local and international labour market over the past few decades (Ukwatta 2005).

2.3 Changing role of women in Sri Lanka

Traditionally, Sri Lankan women were seen as ‘passive and subordinate’ (Hewamanne and Muller n.d., p.121). In the past, women had to perform multiple activities including nurturing and household tasks, but did not receive economic or non-economic benefits except mental satisfaction (Jayaweera 1995, 1991). These activities performed by women were not

measurable in economic terms, and therefore, there was a ‘virtual invisibility of women as productive actors’ within the family (Zlotnik 1995, p.254). In addition to their household chores, most Sri Lankan women contributed to agricultural work as “unpaid family workers”¹⁶. Hewamanne and Muller (n.d.) note that women who contribute to family agriculture as unpaid family workers had little or no access to decision making in the family in terms of financial matters and household activities. Moreover, traditional cultural norms acted as barriers for women in participating in economic activities outside family, and therefore, their contribution to the economic activities outside the family was very limited. Because of their limited economic contribution to the family and to the country, their traditional role has not been understood or appreciated by the majority of the society (Jayaweera 1991). As a result, before the 1970s, attention given to women in the preparation of developmental plans and programmes of the country was inadequate.

However, women’s roles within and outside the family have changed over time due to several social and economic changes that have taken place which facilitated them to be more involved in economic activities (De Silva 2006; Kottegoda 2006). First, with the grant of Universal Adult Franchise in 1931 and the availability of free education since 1945, tremendous changes have taken place transforming the status of women. Consequently, more women have received education at all levels (Ukwatta 2005). Second, the modernisation accompanied by industrialisation has generated a number of options and choices for women that were quite different from the opportunities they had in the past through the erosion of old customs and cultural norms (UN 1993). Third, the economic liberalisation programme that commenced after 1976 has resulted in changing the perception of women’s role as passive within and outside the family (Hewamanne and Muller n.d.). One of the outstanding features of the open economy in Sri Lanka, according to Hewamanne and Muller (n.d.) and De Silva (2006), was the internal and international mobilisation of female labour. They identify this mobilisation process of females at two levels:

- the growing numbers of women leaving the country to work, mainly as domestic workers in the Middle East; and

¹⁶ A person who works without any payment in an enterprise which may be a business enterprise, a service undertaking or a farm operated by a member of the household (DC&S 2007, p. 91).

- increasing participation of women in the internal labour market, particularly in the garment factories in the Free Trade Zone (FTZs) producing clothing for Western markets.

In addition, according to the Ministry of Health and Social Services (1994), the extensive social welfare programmes implemented by the Government of Sri Lanka during the post independence decades has resulted in greater participation of women in the labour market and the country's development process. The structural changes in the economy from agriculture to industry and the service sectors have furthermore increased the movement of female labour from agricultural sector to other sectors. As a result, the imperceptible contributions of women to the family, society and economy have gradually been recognised while the depiction of women as passive and dependent has gradually faded away (DC&S 1995).

There has been a change in women's role from passive and subordinate to a role of a breadwinner (Kottegoda 2006). Moreover, there is an improvement in the socio-economic status of women in Sri Lanka (Ukwatta 2005). A major development since the mid 1980s was the increasing visibility of women in international migration, especially as domestic workers. The next section explains briefly the changing socio-economic status of Sri Lankan women to understand the changes in women's role, their contribution to the development, and response to the labour market opportunities in other countries, especially in the Middle East.

2.4 Improvement in socio-economic status of women in Sri Lanka

The gap between male and female literacy rates has narrowed over the years. The introduction of free education, the expansion of the school system, and other facilities provided by the government irrespective of sex, have contributed largely in narrowing down the gender gap in literacy levels (Jayaweera 1991). Although the literacy rate of men has always been higher than that of women, the rise in the literacy level has been faster and more dramatic for women as shown in Figure 2.1. In 1881, the literacy rate for women was 3.1 per cent and the rate for men was 29.8 per cent with a difference of 26.7 percentage points. While it increased to 43.8 per cent for women and 70.1 per cent for men by 1946, the gap between male and female literacy rates has started to narrow. The literacy rate stood at 89.9 per cent for women and 93.2 per cent for men in 2006 with a significantly reduced gap of 3.3 percentage points.

Figure 2.1 Literacy rates by sex, 1881-2006

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 38 of the print copy of
the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Source: DC&S (2007, p.115)

Both men and women have shown favourable increases in their educational attainment as shown in Table 2.1. However, women have surpassed men in their achievements. According to this table, women's progress in the educational sphere has been striking. Although the proportions of men with qualifications General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (GCE O/L) and General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE A/L) were higher in 1971, the proportions were higher for women in 2006. Consequently, more girls have qualified for university admission, and it was 53.9 per cent in 2006 (DC&S 2007, p.20). The percentage of women with no schooling decreased significantly from 29.5 per cent in 1971 to 6.2 per cent in 2006 implying that females are getting more qualifications. However, a greater imbalance still exists in the actual intakes indicating that there is a higher concentration of women students to be at the borderline. Even though the gender gap in enrolment has narrowed over the years, under representation of females in certain fields is visible at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels (DC&S 1997).

**Table 2.1 Percentage distribution of educational attainment by sex,
1971 and 2006**

NOTE:
This table is included on page 39 of the print copy of
the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Source: DC&S (2007, p.21)

With the increasing level of education, women have entered the labour force at a faster rate than men (DC&S 2007), and this improvement is reflected in an increasing female labour force participation rate¹⁷, which has increased from about 23 per cent in 1981 to 33.2 per cent in 2008 (DC&S 2009, p.9). However, women's labour force participation is still high in the informal sector where women are found to be working as casual labourers, agricultural workers, and as workers attached to home based industries (DC&S 2007). Consequently, the employment of women as unpaid family workers has risen from 58 per cent to 73 per cent within a decade, 1996 to 2006 (DC&S 2007, p.91).

As shown in Figure 2.2, in 2006, the percentages of employer, employee, and own account worker¹⁸ categories were higher for men whereas the unpaid family worker category was higher for women. The unpaid family worker category of women accounts for 22 per cent of the total female workers, and in contrast, only 4 per cent of employed men work this way. While women's participation in agriculture has declined in the recent past, internal mobility to work in the Free Trade Zones and migration as domestic workers overseas indicates an upward trend (SLBFE 2008; DC&S 2007; Ukwatta 2005).

While the percentage of employed females with qualifications of GCE (O/L) and above was 28.9 in 2006, the percentage of unemployed females with qualifications of GCE (O/L) and

¹⁷ Number of persons in the labour force to 100 household population 10 years and over (DC&S 2007, p.79).

¹⁸ A person who operates his/her own enterprise, an enterprise owned partially along with other partners without the aid of any workers regularly employed for the purpose (DC&S 2007, p.91).

above was 44.8 (DC&S 2007, pp.89, 98). More females are engaged in the economic activities of the agricultural sector and they play an important role in the plantation sector too. However, because of occupational sex segregation of the country, the majority of females are confined to low-income, time consuming, and labour intensive activities in the service sector, garment industry, and formal sector.

Figure 2.2 Employed persons by employment status and sex, 2006

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 40 of the print copy of
the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Source: DC&S 2007, p.91

Despite the advances in education, women still face numerous inequalities that obstruct them entering the social and economic development of the country (De Silva 2006). As (De Silva 2006) argues, wage inequalities also continue to discriminate against women (De Silva 2006).

In contrast:

inequalities in the existing socio-economic structure further pushed women to educate themselves to negotiate the power within the existing male dominant system at all levels in Sri Lanka (Gamburd 2000, p.148).

Although there are inequalities in the existing social and economic structure, the majority of females have the opportunity to migrate overseas as unskilled workers and they are mainly from low social and economical backgrounds (De Silva 2006; Save the Children 2006; Gamburd 2000; Eelens 1995). There is an increasing participation of women, who have religious obligations, in the international labour market. For example, Muslim women have begun to enter the international labour market because there is 'a sharp increase in the demand

for Muslim women from the Middle East labour market' (De Silva 2006, p.14). However, the scale of women in migration outside the country is dominant compared to men's migration although female participation in the local labour market is lower than the participation of men.

The slow economic growth, diminishing labour demand for women in the agricultural sector, and the structural changes in the economy has created a surplus of labour in rural communities (De Silva 2006). Therefore, women have had to find job opportunities outside the agricultural labour market. However, women's participation in manufacturing industries has increased noticeably in recent years, and they have been employed in increasing numbers in export oriented modern industry such as garment, lapidary, and electronic industries (Ukwatta 2005). This is because of the increasing employment opportunities provided by these industries and the freedom of women in entering the labour market (Ukwatta 2005). The most significant development found in the service sector is the emigration of women in low-income families for employment as domestic workers to the Middle East countries and to some other Southeast Asian countries. These female workers make a major contribution to the increase in family income as well in the country's foreign exchange earnings.

Sri Lankan women are obtaining more qualifications, increasingly participating in the labour market, and are contributing to the development of the economy and their own household. However, a significant gender imbalance still exists in Sri Lanka as many of the Sri Lankan women are accessing the less prestigious and low-income jobs and the majority are engaged in agricultural work (De Silva 2006; Jayaweera 1991; Hewamanne and Muller n.d.). In spite of the advancements in the socio-economic status of women that have resulted in an increasing involvement in internal and external labour markets, employment opportunities for women with low educational levels and low-income are still limited. Therefore, migrating as domestic workers overseas has become the only option available to them. Consequently, women's contribution is visible not only to the county's economy but also for the survival and upgrading the living condition of their families.

2.5 Migration of domestic workers

A major development in international migration in Sri Lanka since the mid 1980s is the increasing visibility of women migrating as domestic workers overseas. The migration of male labour to the Middle East began in 1976, with female migration beginning about half a decade

later. Therefore, male departures were higher than female departures in the earlier years. Since the middle of the 1980s, females outpaced male migrants and reached 62.1 per cent of the estimated stock of female OCWs in 2007 (SLBFE 2008, p.66). The average of female OCW departures (123,000¹⁹) during the period 1995-2008 indicates that each year a female member is leaving for overseas employment for about one in every twenty seven households. The national average household size²⁰ of 4.1 persons reported in 2006/2007 and the migration stock of 1,004,199 females abroad in 2007 indicates that approximately a total of over 4 million individuals are directly affected by the migration of women (SLBFE 2008, p.5; DC&S 2008e, p.19).

Table 2.2 shows the percentage distribution of the total departures (male and female) for foreign employment by different occupational categories between 1994 and 2008. The total percentages of departures for professional, middle level, and clerical and related work were less than 5 per cent throughout these years. A declining trend was evident in the outflow of domestic workers at the end of the 1990s, but the domestic worker departures were the highest among the departures of all occupational categories. Although a decreasing trend in the percentage of total female departures for employment was also evident since 2001, no significant reduction was found in the percentages of domestic worker departures to the total female departures, and the percentage was fluctuating between 75 to 93 per cent between 1994 and 2008 (SLBFE 2009, p 11).

Male and female departures for foreign employment in 2008 are shown in Figure 2.3. According to this figure, among all employment categories of professional, middle level, clerical and related, skilled, semi-skilled, and un-skilled in which both males and females are employed, male departures were higher than the departures of females. The difference is significant in skilled and un-skilled categories. However, the deployment of females as domestic workers was the highest among all these categories. As earlier reported in Chapter 1, in 2008, 48.9 per cent of the migrants were females and out of these females, 88.2 per cent were domestic workers (SLBFE 2008, pp.3, 11).

¹⁹ Average of female departures for employment during the period 1995 to 2007 (SLBFE 2008, p.1).

²⁰ Average household size is defined as 'number of persons usually living in the household including boarders and servants etc.' (DC&S 2008e, p.19).

Table 2.2 Percentage distribution of the total departures for foreign employment by manpower levels, 1994-2008

NOTE:
This table is included on page 43 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Source: SLBFE (2008, p.6)

Figure 2.3 Departures for foreign employment by different occupational categories and sex, 2008

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 43 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Source: SLBFE 2009, pp.10, 11

The Middle East is the major destination for Sri Lankan domestic workers (Figure 2.4). Although women have migrated to Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Hong Kong since the 1990s, these countries have not absorbed Sri Lankan women as countries in the Middle East. In the beginning of the twentieth century, Saudi Arabia was the major destination for domestic workers (about 36 per cent) followed by Kuwait (about 26 per cent). Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar absorbed around 80 per cent of the Sri Lankan departures in every year during the period 2003-2007 (Shaw 2008a, p.156). By the year 2008, as shown in Figure 2.4, both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait became the major destinations with

Figure 2.4 Estimated stock of Sri Lankan OCWs by the country of destination and sex, 2007

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 44 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

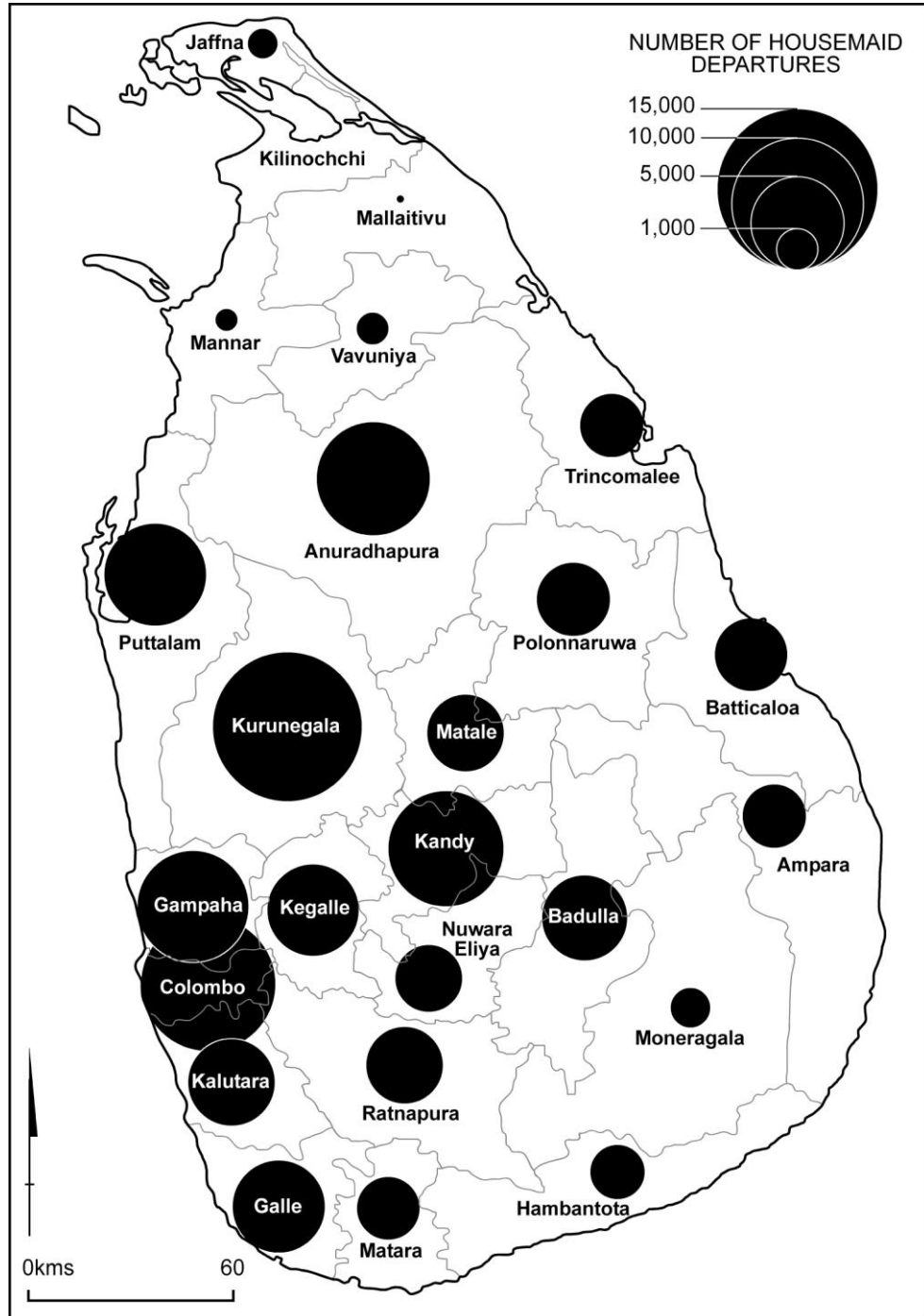
almost equal percentages (32.2 per cent and 31.3 per cent) of domestic workers. UAE was the third with 13.2 per cent followed by Lebanon with 6.4 per cent. Other destinations with percentages between 2 to 4 per cent of domestic workers are Qatar (3.9 per cent), Jordan (3.8 per cent), Bahrain (3.2 per cent), and Cyprus (2.6 per cent). Countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong received less than 1 per cent of the domestic workers.

Female unemployment in Sri Lanka has become one of the significant contributory factors of the female migration as domestic workers (Save the Children 2006; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Ratnayake 1999). The lack of employment opportunities for women within the country is reflected in the geographical distribution of migrant domestic workers as shown in Figure 2.5. According to this figure, the departures of domestic workers are higher in the two districts of Kurunegala and Colombo (study area) where the female unemployment rate is low (DC&S 2007, p.96). This indicates that migration has influenced in the reduction in unemployment in these districts. The unemployment rates are low in most of the other districts, which have higher departures of domestic workers, except the districts of Kandy and Puttalam.

Male departures are higher than female departures in Colombo and Gampaha districts where the percentage of urban population is higher and most of the industries and service centres are located. The majority of men who migrate for professional, middle level, and clerical and related work are from Colombo and Gampaha districts (SLBFE 2008). In the initial phase of labour migration from Sri Lanka, the percentage of women who migrated to the Middle East was higher in urban areas, especially in Colombo and its suburbs (Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Rodrigo 1999). Dias and Jayasundere (2004a, p.3) indicate the following reasons to explain the higher participation of urban women than the women in rural and estate sectors in overseas employment in the initial phase of labour migration to the Middle East:

- the unavailability of jobs for women of low-income families and with low level of education in urban areas;
- the focus of the government on developing agriculture in rural areas that helped rural women to involve in agricultural activities; and
- the availability of jobs in tea plantations for Tamil women.

Figure 2.5 Domestic worker departures by district, 2007



However, with the sectoral changes in the economy from agriculture to the service sector (Shaw 2008a; Gamburd 2005) and the spread of the idea of economic benefits of migration

from working overseas (Gamburd 2005), rural women have also started to seek employment abroad to support their families financially.

As one of the national poverty alleviation policies, the government of Sri Lanka has promoted the foreign employment programme during the last few decades (Kageyama 2008). Dias and Jayasundere (2004a) indicate that the government finds labour migration useful in two ways. First, it relieves the unemployment problem. Korale (1983) argues that migration for foreign employment has contributed to lower the intensity of the unemployment problem through withdrawal of surplus labour. Second, earnings from foreign employment are a source of foreign exchange. Moreover, remittances contribute to the national income and ease foreign exchange needs (Sørensen 2005). It appears that Sri Lanka has a socio-economic and policy environment encouraging women with low socio-economic levels to migrate overseas as domestic workers.

2.6 International female labour migration and the family

Sri Lanka is not only experiencing substantial changes in international migration but also important transformations of the family. In particular, the following changes are observed:

- a decrease in the size of the family (De Silva 2005);
- a movement from the extended family²¹ towards the nuclear family²² (Abeykoon *et al.* 2008);
- an increase in the number of female headed households (Ukwatta 2005);
- a decrease in the strength of patriarchal element (De Silva 2006; Jayaweera 1995); and
- a growing number of transnational families with absent mothers (Ukwatta and Hugo 2009).

2.6.1 The family in Sri Lanka

The family ‘a basic unit in society’ (Battistella and Conaco 1998, p.221; Zlotnik 1995, p.253) and ‘the fundamental unit of social organisation in Asia’ (Hugo 2002, p.14) is an important actor in the migration process. It is the unit, which transmits ‘cultural and moral values to the

²¹ This is defined as ‘the relatives of an individual, both by blood and by marriage, other than its immediate family, such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, and cousins’ (Adoption Glossary 2007).

²² This consists of the marital pair living with their offspring in a separate dwelling (Adoption Glossary 2007).

younger generation’ (Battistella and Conaco 1998, p.221). Biologically, it is defined as ‘a group of two people or more related by marriage, blood relation or adoption and usually live together’ (Children’s Health Encyclopaedia 2007). This definition only takes into account consanguinity or “blood relations” and leaves out relation formed by marriage or affinity. However, it is difficult to find a universal definition because of the constant transformation of families (Battistella 1998). Moreover, defining the family is an issue in migration studies since the members of families live in different countries due to increasing mobility of people worldwide (Zlotnik 1995). However, the essence of the family is the parent-child relationship. One familial form is the nuclear family and the other dominant form is the extended family. In Sri Lanka, the traditional family is extended in nature and has a strong patriarchal element (De Silva 2006). With the advancements in socio-economic status of families, there has been a transformation from extended family to nuclear family (De Silva 2006).

In Sri Lanka, there is no specific definition of family. ‘Household’ is often used in migration literature to denote family whose members are linked both by economic and kinship ties (Zlotnik 1995, p.254). Household is the basic unit that has been used in Sri Lanka in conducting censuses and surveys. The concepts of family and household have close similarities (Abeykoon *et al.* 2008; Zlotnik 1995), and therefore, the definition of the household was taken as a proxy for the family in this study. According to the DC&S (2004, p.1), the definition of household is as follows:

A household may be (i) a one - person household or (ii) multi person household. A one - person household is one where a person lives by himself and makes separate provision for the food. A multi person household is one in which a group of two or more persons live together and have common arrangements for provision of food. Household includes not only members of the family such as husband, wife and children but also others such as relatives, boarders, domestic servants etc. who live with the family and share the same common arrangements for cooking and partaking of food with them. Lodgers of a household, who have their own separate arrangements for meals, are considered as a separate household.

The composition of a family depends on the biological relationship as mentioned earlier while a household is based on certain living arrangements. According to the definition of the household in Sri Lanka, a household can have one or more than one family, or one or more families live together with one or more non-related persons, or can consist entirely of non-

related persons. However, a family typically will not comprise more than one household (Abeykoon *et al.* 2008).

However, during the past few decades, the family structure in Sri Lanka has also undergone significant changes transforming the traditional family comprised of a large number of members to a nuclear family (Abeykoon *et al.* 2008). Traditional families had a large number of members not only due to several generations living together, but also because of the many children that the families had. The family size was mainly determined by cultural and economic factors. In the rural setting, children became an economic asset to work in the farm and household enterprises. The production of goods and services was largely based on the household, and having a large family made both economic and social sense (Abeykoon *et al.* 2008).

2.6.2 The family in transformation

Widespread demographic and socio-economic development over the past five decades in Sri Lanka has brought changes in the family size (Abeykoon *et al.* 2008). While the total number of households in Sri Lanka has increased from 1.84 million in 1963 to 4.5 million in 2006/07 (DC&S 2008e, p.80), the average size of a household has declined from 5.6 to 4.1 during the same period as shown in Table 2.3. While a declining trend has been observed in all sectors throughout the years, a significant decrease has been found in the urban sector.

Table 2.3 Average household size by sector, 1963-2003/04

Sector	Year					
	1963	1973	1981/82	1996/97	2003/04	2006/07
Urban	6.0	5.8	5.5	4.9	4.4	4.3
Rural	5.7	5.6	5.2	4.6	4.3	4.0
Estate	5.8	5.2	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.2
Total	5.6	5.6	5.2	4.6	4.3	4.1

Source: Abeykoon *et al.* (2008, p.6); DC&S (2008e, p.19)

Sri Lanka is the only South Asian country, which had reached replacement level fertility by the year 2000, and the reduction in family size is an inevitable result of this fertility decline (De Silva 2005, p.18). In addition, the increasing age at marriage, mortality decline, marriage

dissolution, and increasing participation of women in economic activities outside the home have influenced the changes in family size in Sri Lanka (De Silva 2005). The migration of women for employment in urban areas in the country and to the Gulf States and Southeast Asian countries during the past few decades is also seen as a contributory factor to the decline in household size (Abeykoon *et al.* 2008).

In Sri Lanka, both extended and nuclear families exist although the family is going through a constant transformation from extended to nuclear (Abeykoon *et al.* 2008; De Silva 2006; Kottegoda 2006). Extended families support their dependents, especially the children and the elderly, in the family (Abeykoon *et al.* 2008; Battistella and Conaco 1998, 1996). With the shift to nuclear family structure, the state has to provide support for the dependents through welfare schemes as both parents in a family are usually working for an income. However, as with other South Asian countries, Sri Lanka considers the extended family as the basic unit of social relations. These extended family relationships become stronger when women migrate for work overseas (Kottegoda 2006).

2.6.3 The emergence of transnational families

Families of Sri Lankan migrants have become transnational with the dispersion of its family members in different countries. Migrants in these transnational families, especially the domestic workers, negotiate care work and family responsibilities with their family members through monetary and non-monetary remittances and quick communication facilities. According to Basch *et al.* (1994), transnational families are the families where core members are distributed in two or more nation states but continue to share strong bonds of collective welfare and unity. Bryceson and Vuorela (2002, p.3) identify:

transnational families as families that live some or most of the time separated from each other yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely “family hood” even across international borders.

Family members are emotionally attached (Basch *et al.* 1994). However, these emotionally attached family members are compelled to separate due to their migration. Participants in focus groups of this study reported that when women migrate, family separation is more painful for the migrant and their family members than is the case for men. However, as Asis (2004a) points out, family separation is not a new phenomenon, and it is true in the case of Sri

Lanka. Although Sri Lankan migrant families have experienced family separation in the past, the way that migrants used to maintain their contacts with their families from a distance is new among transnational families (Asis 2004a; Parrenas 2001a). Therefore, transnational families in Sri Lanka maintain intimacy through the transfers of monetary and non-monetary remittances and quick communication facilities.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a background of the international labour migration flows from Sri Lanka. This discussion has revealed that the scale and magnitude of migration flows of domestic workers to the Middle East are significant. The chapter has also explained briefly the changing roles of women in Sri Lanka followed by a comprehensive account of the changing demographic context of the country and socio-economic status of women. This discussion will help to understand the difference between the socio-economic levels of females in general in Sri Lanka and females migrating as domestic workers. The concept of Sri Lankan family is then discussed focusing on the transformation of the family. The next chapter describes the research methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The ultimate goals of research are to formulate questions and to find answers to those questions. Nestled within these goals are other goals towards, which researchers strive. No one can ask all of the questions and no one can find all of the answers to even a single question, so we need to find some way to limit what we attempt to do. The immediate goals of research - exploration, description, prediction, explanation, and action - provide us with a strategy for figuring out which questions to ask and which answers to seek.

(Dane 1990, p.5)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology²³ adopted to examine the economic and social impacts of migration of female domestic workers on families and children left behind in Sri Lanka. This study combines, as Neuman (2004, p.2) explains, ‘a set of principles, outlooks, and ideas (methodology) with a collection of specific practices, techniques, and strategies (method of inquiry)’ to produce knowledge about the topic. It is:

- a cross sectional study as it examines a social phenomenon at a single point in time (Bryman 2004);
- a deductive strategy as it first formulates research questions and then collects empirical evidence (Neuman 2006); and
- descriptive in nature, as it investigates and describes the phenomenon in detail using different data gathering techniques (Neuman 2006; Bryman 2004; Dane 1990).

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of the philosophical ideas that determine the choice of a research approach followed by the justification for the choice of the approach used in this study. The theoretical framework of the study is then explained. Specific attention to the data

²³ Methodology is the analysis of how research should or does proceed. It includes how theories are generated and tested: what kind of logic is used; what criteria they have to satisfy; what theories look like and how particular theoretical perspectives can be related to particular research problems. In other words, it is the strategy or plan of action that links methods and outcomes that governs our choice and use of methods (Creswell 2003, p.5; Blaikie 1993, p.7).

collection and analysis procedures is paid in the subsequent sections. The chapter concludes with a reflection of the researcher's experience in conducting the research.

3.2 Ontological, epistemological, and methodological issues

The choice of a research approach in terms of different elements of inquiry had been discussed by many authors (for example, Bryman 2004, Creswell 2003; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2003; Crotty 1998; Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998; Blaikie 1993). Examining the different ideas of these authors, two groups that are appropriate in deciding the most appropriate approach for this study were identified. One group of researchers (for example, Bryman 2004; Crotty 1998; Guba and Lincoln 1994) have argued that paradigms²⁴ determine the methods²⁵ and methodological approach. In contrast, the other group has argued (for example, Patton 2002, Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998; Cherryholmes 1992) that paradigms arise from action, situations and consequences. Creswell (2003, p.11) notes that this second group 'first focuses attention on the research problem and then use multiple approaches to derive knowledge about the problem'.

However, as explained by several authors (Guba and Lincoln 2005; Bryman 2004; Creswell 2003; Blanche and Durrheim 1999; Crotty 1998) and as shown in Table 3.1, paradigms indicates what exists, how to understand and how to study a particular phenomenon. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue that each paradigm takes different attitudes towards these positions. In other words, as Blanche and Durrheim (1999, p.6) show, paradigms differ in terms of ontology²⁶, epistemology²⁷, and methodology. According to these authors, the choice of methodological approach is determined by different paradigms.

²⁴ Researchers start a project with certain assumptions about how they will learn and what they will learn during their inquiry. This is called a paradigm and is defined as the worldviews or belief systems that guide researchers (Guba and Lincoln 2005). These paradigms are sometimes called as Knowledge claims (Creswell 2003); philosophical assumptions, epistemologies and ontologies (Crotty 1998); or broadly conceived methodologies (Neuman 2006).

²⁵ Methods of a research are 'the actual techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis. In social sciences they include engaging people in conversation (ranging from the very formal and structured to the informal and free-flowing), getting people to fill in questionnaires, observing behaviour and examining documents or other records of human activity' (Blaikie 1993, p.7).

²⁶ Ontology is defined as 'the nature of reality to be studied and what can be known about the reality. Blanche and Durrheim (1999, p.6).

²⁷ Epistemology is the 'nature of relationship between the researcher and what can be known' Blanche and Durrheim (1999, p.6).

Table 3.1 Paradigms: nature of reality along three elements

Paradigm	Nature of reality along elements		
	Ontology (What exists?)	Epistemology (How to understand?)	Methodology (How to study?)
Positivism/Post-positivism	External reality	Objectivist/ Detached observer	Survey research
Intepretivism/ Constructivism	Internal reality of subjective experience	Subjectivist/ Observer intersubjectivity	FGDs
Pragmatism etc.	Socially constructed reality etc.	Contructionist etc.	Ethnography Experimental research Grounded theory Discourse analysis etc.

Compiled from Blanche and Durrheim (1999, p.6) and Crotty (1998, p.5)

Quantitatively oriented researchers most often work ‘within the positivist/post positivist tradition and are interested in numerical analysis’ (Blaikie 1993, p.16) as shown in Table 3.1. One of the methodological approaches used by the positivists/post positivists in quantitative research is survey research. The following quote of Creswell (2003, p.7) further highlights the use of numerical measures by observing or studying the individual’s behaviour by a post positivist:

The knowledge that develops through a post positivist lens is based on careful observation and measurement of the objective reality that exists “out there” in the world. Thus, developing numeric measures of observations and studying the behaviour of individuals is become paramount of a post positivist.

Positivist researchers have also focused on deductive strategies by testing a theory or hypothesis (Neuman 2006; Punch 2005; Bryman 2004; Durrheim 1999). They begin with a question or a problem that needs to be explored (Blaikie 1993) and collect information to develop statements that will help to explain the phenomenon investigated (Neuman 2004). Therefore, as shown Table 3.1, their ontological position is external reality and epistemological position is objectivism.

Qualitatively oriented researchers focus on inductive research strategies. As Blaikie (1993) describes, they make careful observations on the units of analysis, conduct experiments, and produce new knowledge of the topic (Table 3.1). They believe that the reality can be studied on the subjective experiences of the people, and therefore, it is possible to adopt an interpretive approach as the following quotation of Blanche and Durrheim (1999, p.6) explains:

..... may adopt an intersubjective or interactional epistemological stance toward that reality and use methodologies (such as interviewing and participant observation) that rely on subjective relationship between researchers and subject. This is characteristic of interpretive approach, which aims to explain the subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind social action.

According to the above discussion, positivism/post positivism applies for this study as it:

- aims at establishing the existence of definite social facts using objective measures (face-to-face interviews).

Constructivism (including interpretivism) applies for this study as it:

- tries to understand the internal reality of subjective experiences of the research participants by empathetically interpreting the meanings of what they said (FGDs).

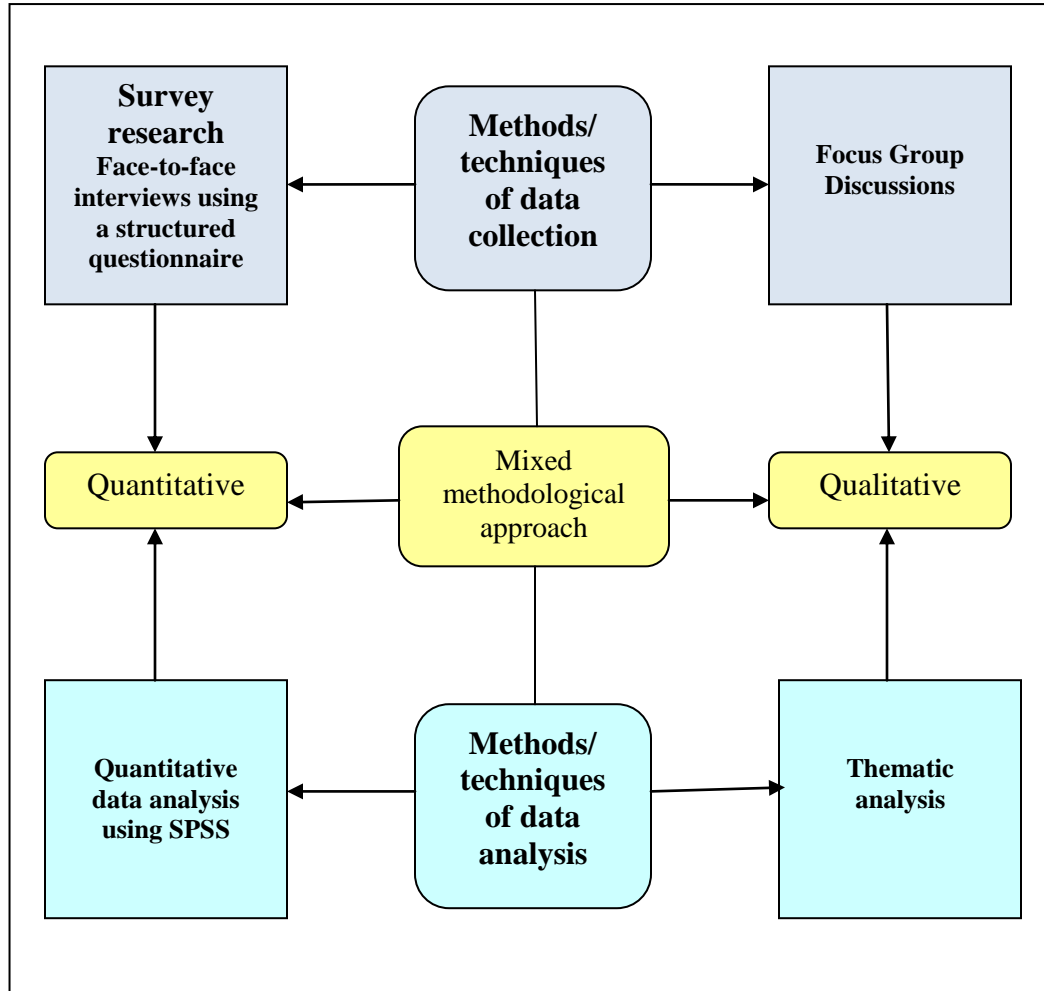
However, Blanche and Durrheim (1999, p.7) suggest that it is possible for a researcher ‘to draw on more than one paradigm’, depending on the nature of work the researcher performs. Therefore, an approach, which integrates both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques, was found to be most suitable for this study.

3.3 Mixed methodological approach: justification for the choice

The approach used in this study was a mixed methodology as shown in Figure 3.1. Face-to-face interviews were conducted using a structured questionnaire to collect quantitative data, which was analysed using Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS). FGDs were conducted to discuss the views of key community members on the issues related to the study topic, and analysed collected information using thematic analysis. The procedures of data

collection and analysis that are illustrated in Table 3.1 are explained in detail in the sections that followed.

Figure 3.1 Methods and methodological approach used in the study



Every method of data collection has its inherent biases (Creswell 2003). Information gathered in FGDs helps to cancel or neutralise the response biases of survey research method (Creswell 2003). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) explain that the use of more than one method in a research provides a better picture of human behaviour and experience. Pearce (2002) and Fricke (1997) point out that (as cited in Axinn and Pearce 2006, p.1):

mixed method data collection strategies are those that are explicitly designed to combine elements of one method, such as structured survey interviews, with elements of other methods, such as unstructured interviews, observations, or focus groups in either a sequential or simultaneous manner.

In addition, ‘mixed methods are useful if they help researchers to meet the criteria for evaluating the goodness of their answers better than do single approach designs’ (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2003, p.14). Therefore, the objective of using a mixed methodology in this study, as Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p.14) explain, is ‘not to replace either of these approaches but rather to draw from the strengths and minimise the weaknesses of both in a single research study’.

The following points further outline the major advantages of using a mixed methodology in this study as Axinn and Pearce (2006, p.2) and Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003, p.18) explain:

- it enables the researcher to answer both confirmatory questions (survey research) and exploratory questions (FGDs) concurrently in the same study;
- it provides an opportunity to the researcher to acquire deeper understanding about the topic as it used quantitative and qualitative approaches in data collection;
- it provides stronger inferences on the impacts of migration on families as survey research gives greater depth, while FGDs gives greater breadth;
- it counterbalances the weakness of one method by the strength of the other method; and
- it produces a comprehensive empirical record about the research topic.

In this study, it was found necessary to obtain the views of the key community members assuming that they know well about the experiences of female migrant families in the study area. It was also expected that the response biases of the survey would be counterbalanced by the responses of the FGD participants. Therefore, collecting both quantitative data and qualitative data using a structured questionnaire and from key informants/community leaders using a pre-determined guide is advantageous to best answer the research questions. Thus, the use of a mixed method was found to be more appropriate. In addition, the choice of the methodology was determined by previous experience of the researcher had through the involvement in population censuses and national sample survey activities in Sri Lanka. Moreover, it was assumed that the audience for whom the thesis will be written has experience in both quantitative and qualitative methods.

3.3.1 Triangulation

One of the elements of a mixed methodological approach is the use of triangulation. Each method employed in the study reveal ‘different facets of symbolic reality’ (Berg 2001, p.4) and therefore, combinations of different methods reveal a more substantive picture of reality. According to Neuman (2006, p.149), ‘it is important to look at something from several angles than to look at it in only one way’, and this is called triangulation in social research. As some authors explain (for example, Neuman 2006; Denzin et al. 2005; Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998), method triangulation and data triangulation are two of the triangulation techniques that can be used in research. The method triangulation has occurred since the study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to study the same phenomenon (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998; Brannen 1992), and is called ‘between method triangulation’ (Brannen 1992, p.11). In this study, data triangulation has occurred at the data collection and analysis stages since information was collected from returned migrants, their family members and key persons participated in FGDs and used them for quantitative and qualitative data analysis. However, the following quotation of Bryman (1984, p.77) explains the use of triangulation techniques provides a better picture of the phenomenon under investigation:

Mixing methods is coincided with the growing attention focused on ‘triangulation’ in social research and it generally refers to a combination of research methods..... It implies that a better picture of reality is achieved when, say, a social survey is linked to some unstructured questioning or participant observation. It also enables the researcher to check the possible eccentricities of a particular technique in order to discern whether any inherent bias is present.

3.3.2 Mixed methodological approaches in migration studies

Findlay and Li (1999, p.50) point out the significance of using mixed methodology in migration studies with the statement ‘population geographers should consider a mixed methods approach to the study of migration’. Furthermore, Findlay and Li (1999, p.51) note that:

the methodological challenge is not only to experiment with new ways of representing the diverse meanings of migration, but also to seriously consider the view that mixing methods is a highly desirable research strategy rather than an optional extra.

This does not mean that mixing methods is new for population geographers and demographers. A review of migration literature reveals that the use of mixed methods by

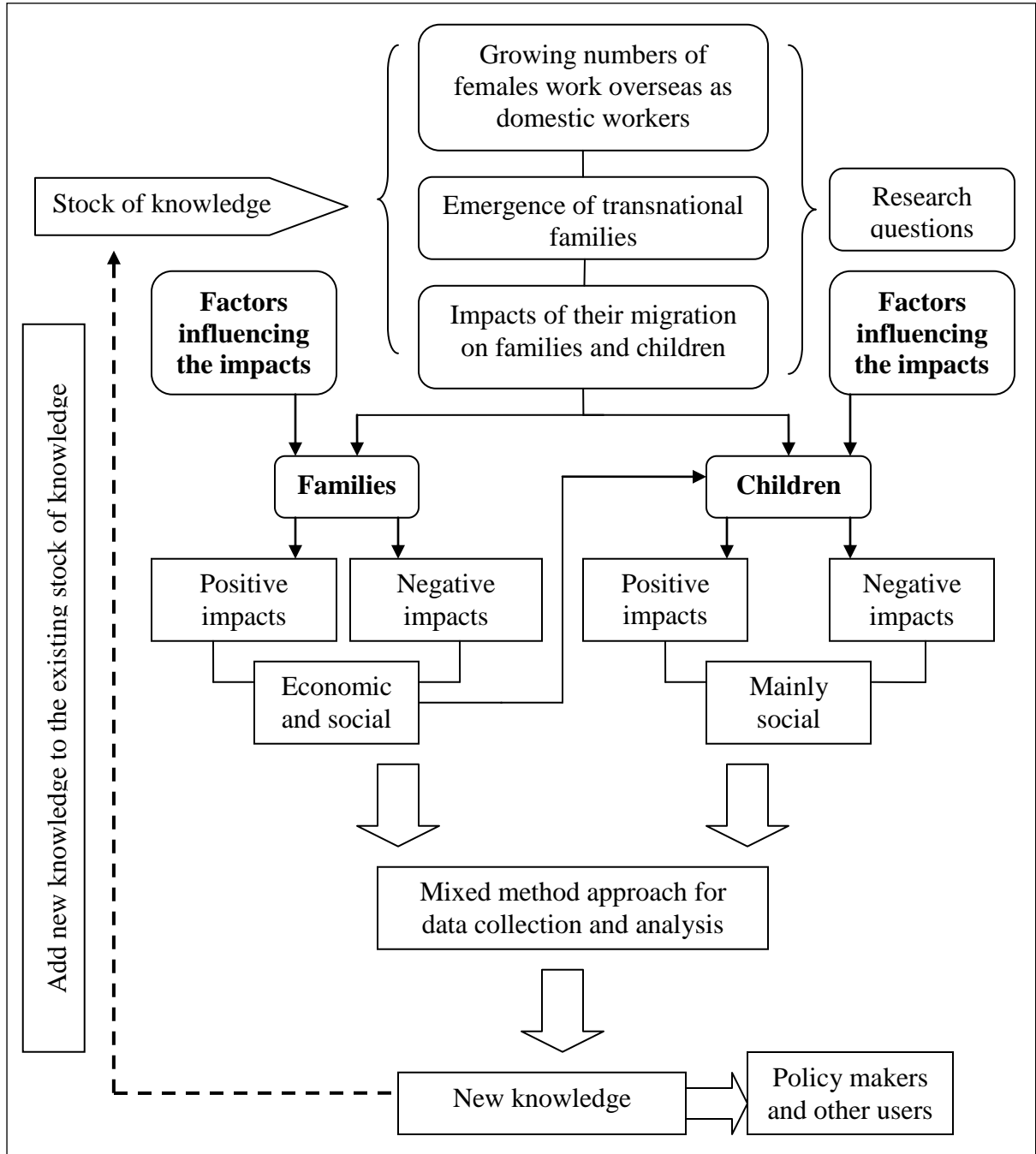
population geographers and demographers has a long history, but there are changes in the purpose and significance of mixing methods. In Sri Lanka, several researchers (for example, Ratnayake 1999; Rodrigo 1995) have used quantitative techniques to analyse migration data. Later on, it was realised that it is not possible to uncover interconnectedness of migration with other aspects without detailed qualitative information. As a result, some other researchers (for example, Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004; Gamburd 2000; Abu-Habib 1998; Vandsemb 1995) have used qualitative approaches in their migration research. Although the adoption of alternative approaches is slow coming, several migration researchers have sought to use more diverse methodological stances in approaching research problems (for example Shaw 2008a; Save the Children 2006; Kottegoda 2006; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Eelens 1995). This study is an example of using a mixed methodological approach in migration studies of Sri Lanka. Having explained the methodological approach of this study, the next section provides a brief description of the theoretical framework before explaining the data collection and analysis procedures of the study.

3.4 Theoretical framework of the study

A deductive research strategy was used in this study as mentioned earlier. Based on the known facts about the study topic, the researcher formulated research questions as Figure 3.2 illustrates. As Bryman (2004, p.8) argues, ‘embedded within these questions are the concepts that need to be translated into researchable entities’ (Bryman 2004, p.8). Therefore, concepts in relation to the family impacts of migration were identified (Figure 3.2). As shown in Figure 3.2 and as has been described in Chapters 1 and 2, what is known about international migration of females from Sri Lanka is their increasing involvement as domestic workers, the emergence of transnational families and the impacts of their migration on families and children. The impacts of migration of females on families can be economic and social with positive and negative effects (Save the Children 2006; Ratnayake 1999; Eelens 1995). All the concepts identified in relation to economic and social impacts of migration and the factors influencing the impacts were transformed into questions, which included in the questionnaire. In addition, themes were identified to be discussed in FGDs. The questionnaire was developed and FGDs were organised enabling to collect required information to answer the research questions. Data were collected and analysed them using a mixed methodological approach.

Finally, a new knowledge, which produced based on the findings of the study, has added to the existing stock of knowledge to be used by the policy makers and other users of migration data.

Figure 3.2 Theoretical framework of the study



3.5 Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. Generally, population censuses in Sri Lanka do not collect information on international migrants. However, in the 2001 census, for the first time, a question was asked to identify the number of persons who were away from the country at the time of the census. National sample surveys have not been carried out on international migration except some small-scale surveys conducted by researchers for specific purposes. The SLBFE is the central authority responsible for collecting, compiling, and disseminating data on foreign employment. However, detailed information is not available from the SLBFE that can be used for the study of the family impacts of migration. It provides information such as departures for employment, destination countries, complaints of migrant workers, labour supply and demand, departures by occupational categories, and remittances received, which can be used as supplementary data for a study of labour migration. Therefore, primary data required for this study had to be collected by means of a sample household survey using a structured questionnaire and FGDs. Secondary data such as the departures for foreign employment, occupational categories of migrants, destination countries, and foreign earnings in Sri Lanka including the migrants' remittances were collected from the published records of the SLBFE. Data on the socio-economic characteristics of Sri Lanka and the study area were obtained from the DC&S.

3.5.1 Survey research

Survey research is the main data collection method used in this study. It has been developed within the positivist approach (Neuman 2004; Babbie 2001) as mentioned earlier, and it involves 'obtaining information directly from a group of individuals' (Dane 1990, p.120). For this study, the group of individuals are the females who had returned to Sri Lanka in the ten years preceding the survey and the members of migrant families who had migrant members still abroad at the time of the survey. The following quote of Neuman (2004, p.161) highlights how strong a survey method is in collecting information from individuals:

Surveys are appropriate for research questions about self-reported beliefs or behaviours. They are strongest when the answers give to questions measure variables. Researchers usually ask about many things at one time in surveys, measure many variables (often with multiple indicators) in a single survey.

Why is survey research important in interviewing these individuals? Researchers (Neuman 2004; Dane 1990) argue that a survey collects a diversity of information such as facts, behaviours and attitudes/opinions.

Facts: ‘A phenomenon or characteristic available to anyone who knows how to observe’
(Dane 1990, p.121)

Demographic and socio-economic characteristics such as age, ethnic group, number of children, marital status, educational attainment, income, occupation, etc. provides background information for this study. It was assumed that these variables are some of the decisive factors for migration of females and they determine the impacts of migration on families and children to some extent.

Behaviours: ‘An action completed by the respondent’ (Dane 1990, p.121)

Most of the questions asked in this survey were directed towards exploring the behaviours of migrants, their children, and their family members. Impacts of migration on families and children may vary according to the demographic and socio-economic background of the migrants and their families. Therefore, asking questions from individuals about behaviours such as the duration of their stay abroad, the way they communicated with their children and family members, spending and caring patterns, behaviours of children, and the impacts of migration were found to be important.

Attitudes/opinions: ‘An expression of a respondent’s preference, feeling, or behavioural intention’ (Dane 1990, p.121)

International migration of females with children has become a timely policy concern in Sri Lanka and hence, it was found necessary to get views of migrants and their family members regarding the future intentions of migration, views on the policy decisions of the government, attitude towards their migration on families and children etc.

As Creswell (2003) and Dane (1990) show, further advantages of using survey research in this study are as follows:

- researchers and the respondents are working together to collect data: the researcher asks questions written in the questionnaire using the same wordings and the respondent answers;
- if the questions are unclear, it is possible to probe;
- obtaining information directly is more efficient;
- possibility of obtaining quantifiable data in connection with more variables; and
- possibility of interviewing many individuals.

It is evident from the above discussion that survey research is the most appropriate methodology to collect data on facts, behaviours and attitudes/opinions from female migrants and their family members.

3.5.2 Selection of the study area

In selecting the study area, the total departures for foreign employment recorded by the SLBFE were used. Table 3.2 shows the total number of registered departures for foreign employment by 25 districts in Sri Lanka during the period 2001-2006, and the latest published data available at the time of survey planning was for 2006. As Table 3.2 shows, the districts of Colombo, Gampaha, Kandy, and Kurunegala have the highest number of departures (departures more than 13,000) in all the years from 2001. It was also found that the total female departures for foreign employment have been higher than male departures throughout the years from 2001 (Table 3.3). Because of the time and cost constraints, it was decided to select only two districts from these four districts.

In selecting the two districts, the percentages of female departures as domestic workers were taken into account. As shown in Table 3.4, Colombo (11 per cent) and Kurunegala (16.4 per cent) are the two districts that recorded the highest percentages of female departures in 2006. In Colombo, the percentage of male migrants is higher than the percentage of female migrants, and vice versa in Kurunegala as shown in Figure 3.3. It is significant that the percentage of departures as domestic workers in 2006 is also higher in Colombo (10.6 per cent) and Kurunegala (16.5 per cent) among the four districts Colombo, Gampaha, Kandy, and Kurunegala. In every year, the percentage of females working abroad as domestic workers is higher than the other occupational categories of professional, middle, clerical and related,

Table 3.2 Registered departures for foreign employment by district, 2001-2006

NOTE:
This table is included on page 64 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Source: SLBFE (2007, p.27)

Note: No departures have been recorded for Kilinochchi district

* Provisional

skilled, and unskilled (SLBFE 2007). In 2006, out of the total female departures for employment abroad from Colombo, 85.3 per cent were domestic workers and from Kurunegala, some 90.2 per cent (SLBFE 2007, p.33). Therefore, Colombo and Kurunegala

districts were found to be the most suitable districts to sample. This is the first stage of the sample selection procedure as presents in Figure 3.4.

**Table 3.3 Percentage distribution of total departures
by sex, 2001-2006**

NOTE:
This table is included on page 65 of the print copy of
the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Source: SLBFE (2007, p.1)

In the second stage, as shown in Figure 3.4, two Divisional Secretariat Divisions (DS), the next lower administrative division to the district, from each district were selected. In selecting these DS Divisions, the total number of female departures as domestic workers from DS Divisions, irrespective of the country of destination, was taken into account. In addition, urban/rural residence, ethnic group distribution, and other socio-economic characteristics of the population were considered to be important.

According to the SLBFE (2007, p.15), out of the total domestic workers of the Colombo district, the highest percentage (55.1 per cent) was recorded for Colombo DS Division, which is an urban area, followed by Hanwella DS Division (9.2 per cent), a rural area. Of the total domestic workers from Kurunegala district, the highest percentage (27.2 per cent) was from Mawatagama DS Division, which is a rural area, followed by Kurunegala DS Division (23.2 per cent), an urban area (SLBFE 2007, p.48). The population of these four DS Divisions represent different socio-economic characteristics since both urban and rural migrant households are included. Thus, Colombo, Hanwella, Kurunegala, and Mawatagama DS Divisions were selected as shown in Figure 3.4.

Only a few Grama Niladhari Divisions (GN), the next lower level administrative division, were selected from each DS Division in the third stage as shown in Figure 3.4. In selecting these GN Divisions, information had to be sought from the 2001 Census of Population and Housing records, since no information about female departures by GN Divisions was available from the SLBFE. These GN Divisions recorded the highest numbers of female migrants in

Table 3.4 Percentage distribution of the registered male and female departures for foreign employment and domestic workers by district, 2006

NOTE:

This table is included on page 66 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Source: SLBFE (2007, p.33)

Figure 3.3 Departures for foreign employment by district and sex, 2006

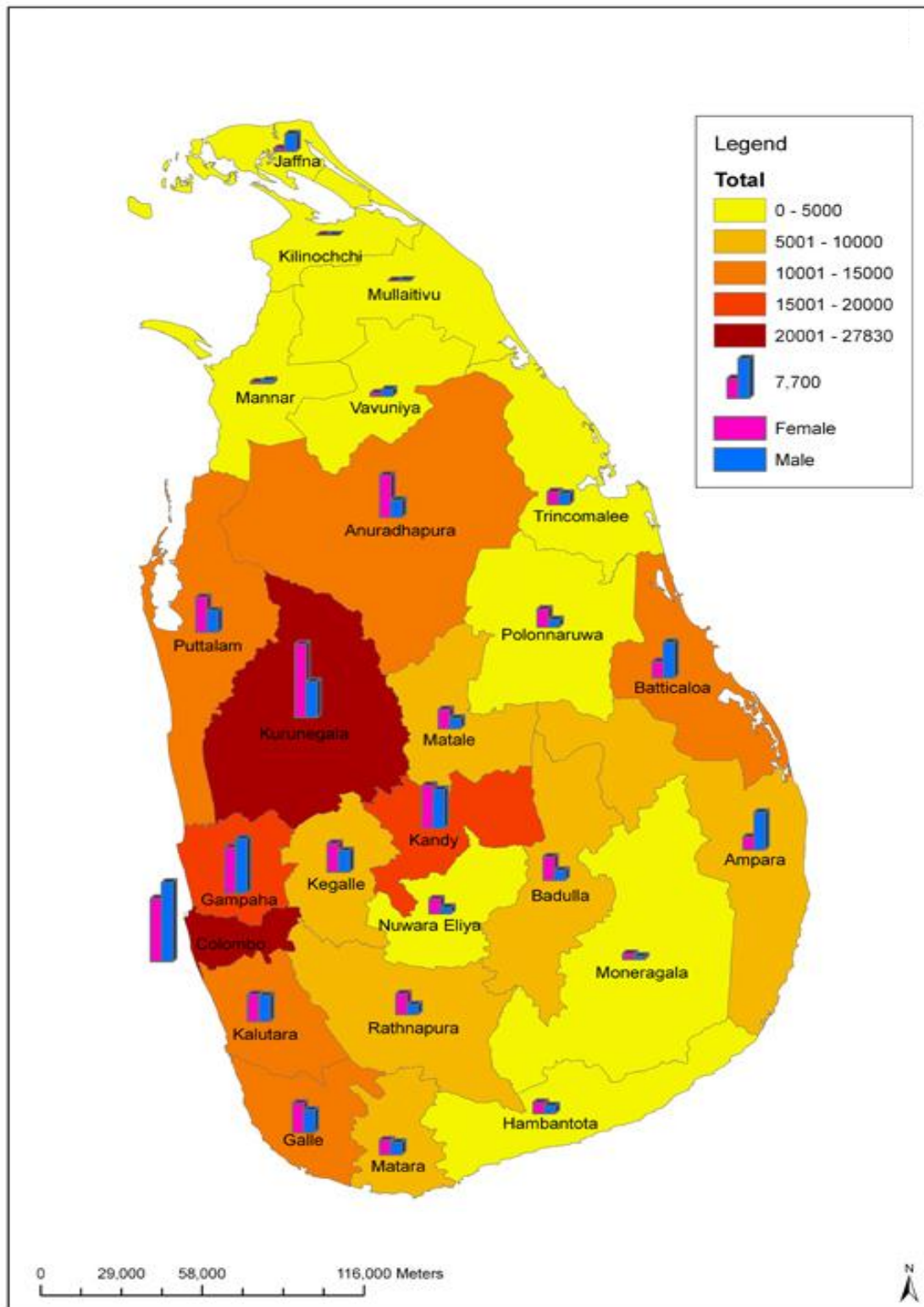
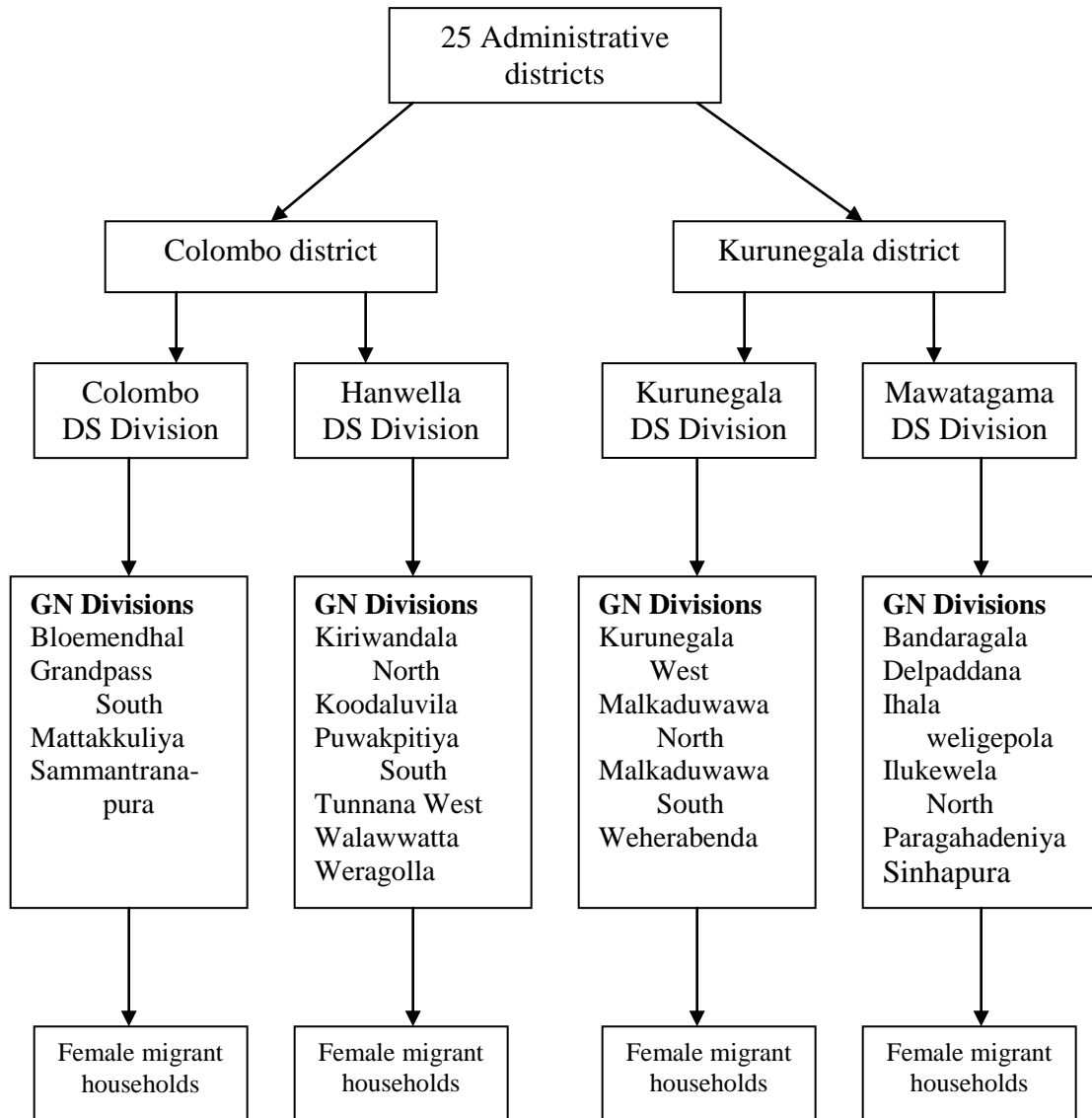


Figure 3.4 Sample selection procedure of the study

2001. This information was more or less consistent with the information recorded by the Grama Niladharies (Head of GN Divisions). Finally, female migrant households were selected from these GN Divisions making the total sample size to 400. From each DS Division, 50 returned migrants and 50 family members were interviewed. This whole selection procedure is shown in Figure 3.4.

3.5.3 The context of the study area

Migrant households were selected from Colombo and Kurunegala districts as shown above. They are heterogeneous because of the heterogeneity in terms of the geographical location and demographic and socio-economic levels of the study area in which the sample was drawn. Among the domestic workers departed in 2008, 23.9 per cent were from these two districts: 10.5 per cent were from Colombo district and 13.4 per cent from Kurunegala (SLBFE 2009, p.36). Colombo, the most populous district and the capital of Sri Lanka, is situated in the Western Province and Kurunegala district, which is about 70 kilometres away from Colombo, is situated in North Western province (see Figure 3.3). The economy of Colombo district is predominantly non-agrarian because, the majority of the total employed population in the district are engaged in industrial work (31.5 per cent) and service enterprises (65.2 per cent) (DC&S 2009, p.14). The percentage of population engaged in agriculture and fishing is only 3.2 per cent (DC&S 2009, p.14). In contrast, the economy of Kurunegala is a mixture of agricultural (31.8 per cent), industrial (29.8 per cent) and service (38.3 per cent) activities (DC&S 2009, p.14). The distribution of agricultural, industrial, and service activities of Kurunegala district is quite similar to the overall picture of the economy of Sri Lanka, which consists of 32.6 per cent agricultural, 26.2 per cent of industrial and 46.2 per cent service activities (DC&S 2009, p.14).

Table 3.5 provides some selected demographic and socio-economic indicators, which show the heterogeneity of these two districts. Colombo is the only district with more than half of its population (54.6 per cent) living in urban areas according to the 2001 census. The percentages of rural and estate population are 45.1 per cent and 0.3 per cent respectively. Unlike the other districts in Sri Lanka, it is the most densely populated district with a density²⁸ of 3,300 per square kilometre, which is about ten times larger than the national average of 300. Average household size is slightly higher than the national average (4.1), and the sex ratio is more than the national average of 99.2. Three quarters of its population are Sinhalese with 12.1 per cent Tamils, 9 per cent Muslims and 2.3 per cent other minorities. Literacy rate for the district is 94.7 and it is slightly lower for females than the rate of males. Labour force participation of females is low and it is less than half of the rate of males. Unemployment rate for females is higher than the rate of males but it is lower than the national rate (10.8 per cent) and higher

²⁸ Number of persons per square kilometre.

than only for two districts in Sri Lanka excluding the districts of Northern and Eastern provinces of the country. Percentage of poor people live in Colombo is much lower than the percentage of total population of poor (12.6 per cent). Accordingly, mean household income of Colombo is higher than the mean household income of the country (US\$ 232).

**Table 3.5 Some key indices of population and socio-economic characteristics:
Colombo and Kurunegala districts**

Characteristics	Colombo district		Kurunegala district	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Population 2001	1,151,413	1,099,861	723,179	737,036
Average household size 2006/07	4.2		3.8	
Population density 2001	3,330 per sq. km.		316 per sq. km.	
Sex ratio 2001	104.7		98.1	
Percentage of urban 2001	54.6		2.4	
Percentage of rural 2001	45.1		97.2	
Literacy rate 2006	95.2	93.5	94.0	90.8
Labour force participation 2006	67.6	29.6	69.7	39.8
Unemployment rate 2006	4.6	7.8	4.4	9.0
Percentage of poor households 2006/07	3.9		12.9	
Mean household income 2006/07	US\$ 377		US\$ 201	

Source: DC&S (2008b); DC&S (2007); DC&S (2001), www.government.gov.lk;

DC&S (2008e, pp.10, 19, 51)

Kurunegala district has a population which is about half of the population of Colombo (Table 3.5). What is interesting is, unlike Colombo, its sex ratio is below 100 and population density is about one tenth of the density of Colombo district (316). When compared to the population of Colombo, population of Kurunegala district can be classified as rural agrarian since 97.2 per cent of its population living in rural areas and about 33.1 per cent of the population employed in agricultural activities. However, the literacy rates of both males and females are lower than the rates of both males and females in Colombo district. Although there is no significant variation of male labour force participation in the two districts, female labour force participation rate is significantly higher in Kurunegala district than the rate of Colombo. This is probably due to the involvement of more women in agricultural activities and work in garment factories as reported by the FGD participants. It is interesting to note that the

percentage of poor population and mean monthly household income in Kurunegala are quite similar to the national figures. Although the labour force participation of women in Kurunegala district is higher than the labour force participation of women in Colombo district, in general, socio-economic levels are better in Colombo district.

As reported by the FGD participants, the majority of men in the study area of Kurunegala district are employed as labourers and are engaged in agricultural activities. Some are engaged in their own small-scale businesses, and the number of persons engaged in government and private sector jobs are very low. Some of the families, especially the Muslim families have been able to start small businesses using the money earned by the migrants. In addition, some men work as shop assistants in the town. In contrast, men in the study areas or the district of Colombo are engaged in different kinds of jobs. Many people work as labourers. Some of them work in fish and vegetable markets and some others work as pavement hawkers. In areas where plantations are located, both men and women work in the plantations as labourers and many instances, women work as tea pluckers. The number of public and private sector employees live in the area is low. According to the views of the FGD participants, the education of both men and women in the study area is low.

In urban areas, many people live in small lands given by the government. In several houses, two or three families live together. Many people live in shanties and slums. Housing problem is acute. When the children of these families are grown up, they need to buy land and build a house. Therefore, many women in these areas migrate although they understand living away from their families is difficult. Early marriages of children are common. In many situations, parents have to support financially their married children. As a result, migrant women have to work abroad for a longer period. In general, the level of education of the children of these families is rather low, and these children end up their education after sitting for GCE O/L examination. This information indicates that, in general, the socio-economic conditions of migrant families are rather low compared to the condition of the families in the two districts. This situation has inspired more women in these areas to migrate abroad even as domestic workers to improve the living condition of their families.

3.5.4 Sample selection

The sample is heterogeneous in the sense that it included both urban and rural areas, different ethnic groups and migrant households with diverse socio-economic characteristics. It consists of 217 female domestic workers who had returned to Sri Lanka in the ten years preceding the survey and 183 members of the migrant families where female domestic workers were still overseas at the time of the survey. These two types of migrant households were selected for the study assuming that the perception of returned migrants and their family members on the impacts of migration on families and children will be different. In selecting the returned migrants, the number of years that the migrants stayed after their return was limited to 10 years or less to reduce the memory lapse in recalling the past incidences relating to the questions asked. Conducting interviews with returned migrants and family members in their homes allowed the interviewers to observe the material conditions of their houses.

It was not possible to use any form of a random sampling method in this study because there was no comprehensive sampling frame to identify the migrant households according to the selection criterion of the study. As Neuman (2006) also notes, one of the prevalent problems face by researchers in deciding upon a probability sampling method is the lack of comprehensive and accurate sampling frames. Therefore, respondents were selected using “snowball” referrals, and such a non-probability sampling technique was found to be suitable when ‘a population is hidden, and thus difficult to identify’ (David and Sutton 2004, p.152). However, it is possible to use this method for social research when the researchers are interested in an interconnected network of people (Neuman 2004). The network in this study is the families of migrants experiencing the similar economic and social phenomenon. Each migrant in GN Divisions is connected with another through a direct or indirect linkage. Neuman (2004, p.140) argues that:

this [linkage] does not mean that each person directly knows, interacts with, or is influenced by every other person in the network. Rather, it means that, taken as a whole, with direct and indirect links, most are within an interconnected web of linkages.

These connections may occur in the village/town they live, while working abroad or when meeting them at the SLBFE.

Snowball sampling is a method for identifying and selecting the cases in a network (Neuman 2006, 2004; Bryman 2004; David and Sutton 2004). Neuman (2006, p.221) further states, that ‘it is based on an analogy to a snowball, which begins small but becomes larger as it is rolled on wet snow and picks up additional snow’. According to Neuman (2006), snowball sampling is a multistage technique as it begins with one or a few people or cases that spread out based on links to the initial cases. In this survey, the first few households were identified with the help of key community workers, through a well-known person to the area, or a returned migrant. Interviews were commenced with the identified household, and then were continued by identifying migrant households with the help of the respondents previously interviewed or by others who could identify migrant households. Interviewers continued this process until they completed the interviewing of the pre-determined sample size in the area. However, with this small sample size and the process of selecting the respondents through personal networks rather than using a sampling frame do not allow results to be generalised to the total population of migrants (Neuman 2006; Bryman 2004; Creswell 2003).

3.5.5 Preparatory work for data collection

Fieldwork was carried out within three months between April to June 2008. Before starting the fieldwork, a further three months were spent on the preparation of the fieldwork. This preparatory work included obtaining ethics approval, obtaining views from the officers in relevant organisations in Sri Lanka regarding the questionnaire, finalising the questionnaire including the translation from English to Sinhala language, selecting and training interviewers, the preparation of the instruction manual, pre-testing the questionnaire, and organising the fieldwork.

Ethical considerations

This study was conducted with the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Adelaide. The Letter of Approval for the study and the Participant Information Sheet distributed to the respective migrants are provided in Appendices I and II. Since this study covers many aspects of the impacts of female migration on families and children left behind, considerable care was taken to ensure that the research complied with the ethical responsibilities of researchers set out by the National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council and Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee (2007). ‘All

approaches recognise ethical dimensions to research’ (Neuman 2006, p.129) and therefore, the researcher ‘needs to be aware of the general agreements shared by researchers about what is proper and improper in the conduct of scientific inquiry’ (Babbie 2001, p.470).

In this survey, the interviewer’s ‘[knocking] on the door signalled the beginning of an activity’ that the respondent did not expect, and it required ‘significant time and energy’, which interrupted the respondent’s regular activities (Babbie 2001, p.470). Moreover, in this survey, as Babbie (2001, p.473) notes, respondents had to reveal their ‘personal information to a stranger’, the interviewer. Therefore, the researcher and the interviewers had to be very cautious about the ethical issues of the different stages of the research. Some of the ethical issues explain by Dane (1990) were found to be useful in this research as shown below:

- Before starting the fieldwork - voluntary participation, informed consent, physical harm, and psychological harm;
- During the fieldwork - researcher’s identity, behaviour changes in participants and the retraction of consent alleviating harmful after effects; and
- After the fieldwork - anonymity of participants, confidentiality, data analysis and reporting research results.

Therefore, by providing a copy of the Information Sheet (in Sinhalese language), which described all the issues mentioned above including the purpose and value of the study, respondents were made aware of all the ethical issues related to research.

The issue identified as most important was the need for complete confidentiality about the information disclosed by the respondents. Therefore, the statements “All information collected at this survey will be treated as strictly confidential” and “Individual information will not be released” were clearly written in a box on the cover page of the questionnaire. The other ethical consideration was interviewing children left behind by migrant mothers. Due to the sensitive nature of this issue, children were not interviewed. Instead, information regarding the children was collected by interviewing their mothers, their relatives in the family and discussions with teachers who participated in the FGDs.

Discussions with officials

This study is about Sri Lankan female migrants and their families and children, and therefore, to make the questionnaire more effective in the context of Sri Lanka, a few discussions were conducted with the officials of the organisations such as the Department of Census and Statistics, the Save the Children, the UNICEF, and the SLBFE who had experience in conducting surveys. These discussions were helpful to improve the quality of the questionnaire and to get appropriate answers from the respondents.

The questionnaire

Two types of questionnaires were used: one for returned migrants and the other one for family members (Appendix III and IV). Although the questionnaires are similar in content, wording of many questions are different. In addition, some questions included in the returned migrant questionnaire were omitted in the questionnaire for family members. Both these questionnaires have two sections: household schedule and individual schedule. The household questionnaire serves two purposes: to collect some socio-economic characteristics of the household and to select the respondents eligible for an interview. After completing the household schedule for a selected migrant household, eligible respondent was identified to fill out the individual schedule. The selection criterion for the eligibility of respondents was as follows:

- for returned migrants - interview women with children who worked overseas as domestic workers more than one year and returned to Sri Lanka after January 1998; and
- for family members - interview a family member who lived in the household in the absence of the migrant woman who had children and worked overseas as a domestic worker but worked more than a year.

The individual schedule was used to collect detailed information about the study topic from all the eligible respondents. In this schedule, pre-coded questions were included when the responses likely to emerge were known and open-ended questions were included when the responses tended to be unknown. Pre-coded questions are of two types: single response questions and multiple response questions. Responses to these questions were re-coded by circling a number or multiple numbers, entering the relevant code in the boxes provided, or circling a code and entering the relevant code in the box. In these pre-coded questions, abstract

ideas were coded in numerical forms, and in open-ended questions, written ideas in the form of words and sentences were transformed into numerical form.

Detailed information was collected through face-to-face interviews, conducted in the residence of the respondent. Questions were included in the questionnaire facilitating the identification of the demographic and socio-economic background of the respondents and their households, determinants of migration, economic and social conditions before and after migration in relation to the family and children, future intentions of migration, and the views on the decisions of the government in banning female migration. After preparing the questionnaires in English language, they were translated only into Sinhala language as Tamil and Muslim migrant families interviewed were able to understand Sinhala and respond in Sinhala.

Selecting and training interviewers

Five interviewers were recruited to assist on a full time basis. They were graduate students of the University of Colombo with research experience, and they lived in the study area. From the beginning, interviewers showed enthusiasm for the project, so they quickly appreciated its relevance and were keen to understand the survey techniques.

An Instruction Manual (Appendix V) was prepared to be used by the interviewers. This includes two sections. Section 1 has general instructions for conducting successful interviews, and section 2 has special instructions in filling out the questionnaire. A two-days training programme was conducted by the researcher for interviewers before and after the pre-test 'to make sure that they knew it inside out' (Bryman 2004, p.117). It consisted of a series of discussion sessions, which included the aims, objectives, and scope of the study, sampling procedures, identification of respondents, interviewing techniques, and instructions on how to fill out the questionnaire. An exhaustive examination of the questionnaire was also made to remove ambiguities in the questions.

Pre-test

Pre-testing is an important activity before starting the survey since 'no survey data can be trusted unless [the researcher] can be sure that the respondents understood the instrument to obtain appropriate responses' (Dane 1990, p.127). It served several purposes: producing modifications to the questionnaire in order to increase the accuracy and adequacy; improving

the efficiency in data collection as it checked the flow of questions, wordings, clarity, and the duration of interview; reviewing the instruction manual; and familiarising the interviewers with the questionnaire. A series of practice field interviews were conducted and problems resulting from them were discussed.

Organising the field work

Before starting the fieldwork, a reconnaissance was done within the study area. The major aim of this reconnaissance was to deepen the researcher's knowledge of the study area, its people, and their patterns of mobility. It involved extended visits to offices where the discussions were held with officials who had experience in fieldwork and many other persons with a sound knowledge of the local situation. At this stage, permission was sought and obtained from District Secretaries and Divisional Secretaries to carry out the survey in the study area.

3.5.6 Field work

Primary data, both quantitative and qualitative, were collected during the period April to June 2008. Collecting information is the most important activity since the successful completion of the study solely depends on the accuracy and completeness of the data collection. Interviewing individuals using a questionnaire is not an easy task because it may include questions that are personal. In Sri Lanka, individual interviews are usually conducted in the respondent's household, and therefore, for this survey, respondents' residences were considered as the best place for interviewing. The length of an interview is also an important factor in conducting an interview as it involves a respondent's valuable time. If the interviews are too short, it may not obtain required information and if too long, it may fatigue respondents (Axinn and Pearce 2006). In this survey, the respondents were not exhausted as interviews were completed in approximately 45 minutes.

Key features of the survey questionnaire are 'the standardised questions' (Axinn and Pearce 2006, p.4) and their comparability. Substantial evidence indicates that differences in question wording results in responses that are not comparable (Axinn and Pearce 2006). Axinn and Pearce (2006, p.4) reports that:

the level of standardisation and structure allows well trained interviewers to administer a survey as intended by the survey designer and to administer it to a very large number of respondents.

Therefore, interviewers were instructed to ask all questions in the same order and using the same wording to maintain the comparability of the interviews and to increase the accuracy of the responses. Interviewers asked the questions and recorded the responses by circling a code, entering numbers in boxes, or writing the response in the given space. Since this was a small-scale survey of 400 interviews, close supervision of interviewing was maintained by checking the completed questionnaires daily for its accuracy and consistency and by random checking of interviews.

3.5.7 FGDs

Four FGDs were conducted in four DS Divisions. These discussions functioned as a precursor to face-to-face interviews since they were conducted before starting individual interviews. Conducting FGDs for this study was considered important for two reasons:

- involvement of key community members who know the migrants and their families in the study area; and
- the joint construction of meaning to the discussion.

Divisional Secretaries gave their full cooperation to organise the FGDs as well as to make the discussions productive. The researcher had discussions with the Divisional Secretaries prior to the commencement of fieldwork to explain the purpose and importance of the study, to introduce interviewers, and to organise fieldwork including FGDs. Special attention was given in the discussion in selecting key community members for FGDs. These discussions helped to convince them of the importance of the study. Divisional Secretaries agreed to invite about 10-12 officers such as Grama Niladharies of the selected GN Divisions, midwives, school teachers, doctors, Samurdhi Development Officers, Child Development Officers, and some of the returned migrants. These are the officers who have close relationships with the families in their areas. Many of them knew these families personally. These groups were heterogenous in terms of gender, profession, and experience and therefore, contributions (diverse opinions and experiences) to the discussion were constructive.

Interviewers employed to conduct the survey were also invited to participate since they:

- had to work as transcribers;

- could obtain a clear idea about the information that they are going to collect in the field;
- could receive a thorough knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation; and
- could meet the relevant officers in the area.

Once the discussion commenced, as Gibbs (1997, p.5) explains, the role of the researcher as the moderator became critical, especially in terms of ‘providing clear explanations of the purpose of the study, helping people feel at ease and facilitating interaction between group members’. The task of the moderator was made systematic by preparing a procedural guide in advance to conducting the discussion.

It included:

- introduction to the study - moderator;
- self-introduction by participants;
- explanation of the demographic and socio-economic background of the areas selected - Grama Niladharies;
- initiation of the discussion - moderator; and
- discussion.

During the discussion, the moderator promoted debate by asking questions. Sometimes the moderator had to probe for details, or move things forward when the conversation was drifting or had reached a minor conclusion. Moderator had to keep the session focused and ensure everyone participated (Gibbs 1997). The moderator’s experience in conducting FGDs and interpersonal skills promoted the participant’s trust in the moderator, increased the likelihood of open and interactive dialogues and made the discussion successful.

Following are some of the advantages of conducting a FGD in this study:

- it was an organised discussion with a selected group of individuals, who know the study area well, to gain information about their views and experiences of the topic;
- it was possible to obtain different perspectives about the same topic; and

- it provided shared understanding of the topic.

Compared to individual interviews, which aimed to obtain individual attitudes, beliefs and feelings, FGDs elicit a multiplicity of views and emotional processes within a group context.

3.6 Data Analysis and presentation

Data analysis and presentation of results was the ultimate goal of the researcher. It should be noted that ‘the term mixed method refers to both data collection and analysis given the type of data collected is so intertwined with the type of data analysis used’ (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998, p.43). Data analysis consists of both quantitative and qualitative methods: quantitative analysis was done in terms of frequencies, cross tabulations as well as the calculation of statistical indicators; and qualitative data analysis was done in terms of thematic analysis.

3.6.1 Quantitative data analysis

Information collected using the questionnaire was in a raw form, which had to be reorganised into a form suitable for computer processing.

Editing and coding

All the questionnaires were manually edited for completeness, accuracy and consistency. After the completion of editing, information was transformed to ‘data’ (Bryman 2004, p.64), in other words, information was prepared in a quantitative form since both pre-coded and open-ended questions were included. According to Bryman (2004, p.64), this quantification entails ‘coding’ the information. Two types of coding were used in this survey: pre-coding and post-coding. Pre-coding was done in the questionnaire preparation stage. Post-coding was done after the completion of data collection. Answers to the open-ended questions had to be transformed into numeric form, and it was a laborious exercise since answers for many open-ended questions had to be coded in order for the data to be analysed quantitatively. For this purpose, a coding manual describing the coding procedures was prepared.

Data entry

Data entry was done by the researcher using SPSS. Data entry had to be done very carefully since the data of the two types of questionnaires (returned migrants and family members) had to be combined to make a single data set.

Cleaning data

To avoid misleading results and to enhance the validity of results, it was found necessary to make sure the accuracy of data as errors occur at the coding and data entry stages. Therefore, the researcher verified the accuracy of data in three ways:

- possible code cleaning: checked each variable for its categories (codes);
- frequency check: checked frequencies for inconsistencies; and
- contingency cleaning: looked for logically impossible combinations using cross-classifications.

Analysis

In the analysis stage, it was found necessary to identify the ways to manipulate and summarise numbers that represent data and to use a number of techniques to reduce the amount of data selected to test for relationships between variables to develop ways of presenting the results to others (Bryman 2004; Neuman 2004). To perform these tasks, the data set generated four kinds of variables: interval/ ratio, ordinal, nominal, and dichotomous; however, interval/ratio level data were few compared to the other variables.

Analysis was done in terms of uni-variate and bi-variate analysis. Different kinds of diagrams such as bar graphs and pie charts are used to show the data. In analysing interval scale data, measures of central tendency were used as they ‘encapsulate in one figure a value that is typical for a distribution of values’ (Bryman 2004, p.228). In most instances, it was found necessary to use bi-variate analysis in terms of contingency tables. The sample size has an effect on the analysis in terms of contingency tables (Bryman 2004). In other words, care had to be taken about the number of categories of the variables to avoid empty cells.

3.6.2 Qualitative data analysis

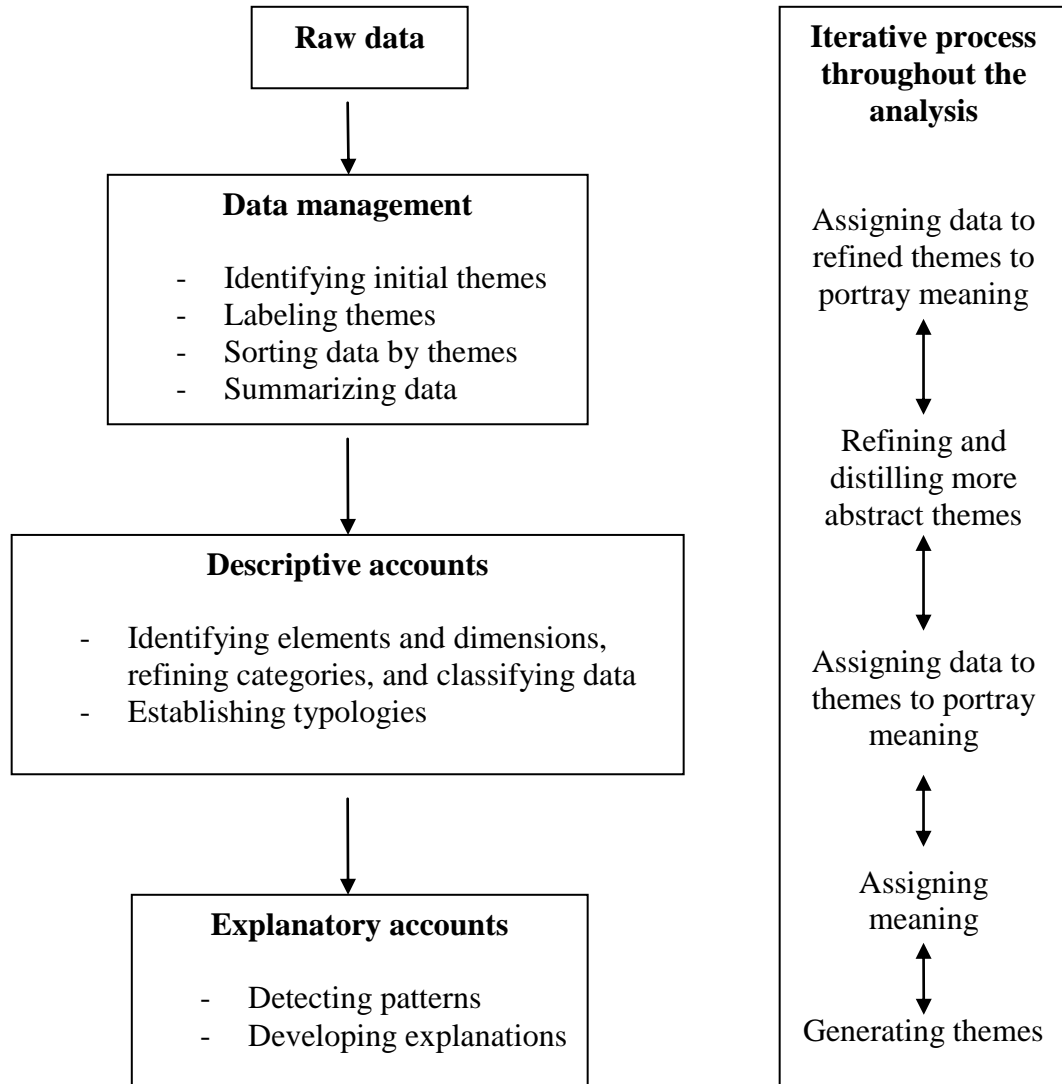
Unlike quantitative data analysis, qualitative data analysis is less standardised as they are in the form of text, written words or phrases in social life (Punch 2005; Bryman 2004; Newman 2004). Analysis is a ‘continuous and iterative process’ (Spencer *et al.* 2003, p.219) and it requires ‘a mix of creativity and systematic searching, a blend of inspiration and diligent detection’ (Spencer *et al.* 2003, p.199). There are no clearly agreed rules and procedures to analyse qualitative data unlike quantitative data (Punch 2005; Bryman 2004; Neuman 2004;

Spencer *et al.* 2003). Although qualitative data were collected using a pre-determined conceptual framework for this study, they had to be converted to a more manageable and abstract form. Of the wide variety of approaches available for qualitative data analysis (Bryman 2004; Spencer *et al.* 2003), the ‘thematic framework’ illustrated by Ritchie *et al.* (2003, p.220) was considered the most appropriate approach for this study since the thematically analysed data could be easily linked to quantitative analysis.

Data collected were in the form of verbatim transcripts of discussions. Soon after the completion of data collection, field transcriptions were translated into English since the discussions and interviews were conducted in Sinhala. The analytic structure illustrated in Figure 3.5 was used for the analysis. First, raw data were transformed into a manageable form and this process is called ‘data management’ (Figure 3.5). In doing so, the main themes were identified as shown in Table 3.6 first, and then sub sections with category numbers for each theme were identified. Having identified the themes, category numbers were assigned to raw data carefully, which is called ‘indexing’ (Ritchie *et al.* 2003, p.224). Then data were sorted locating the similar contents together and data were finally summarised. In the second stage, the researcher used ‘synthesised data to prepare descriptive accounts, synthesising key dimensions and mapping the range and the diversity of each phenomenon’ as Ritchie *et al.* (2003, p.224) explained. Next, typologies that are specific forms of classification, which helped to describe and explain the real world in relation to the study topic was developed. In the final stage, the researcher was able to find patterns within the data and explained them to corroborate the findings of the survey results.

However, it is an iterative process as mentioned earlier and as depicted in Figure 3.5. Once the themes are identified and labelled, and explanations are developed, ‘there is a constant need to revisit the original data set to find new clues, missing themes etc.’ as Spencer *et al.* (2003, p.206) emphasises. The researcher started with some themes and then elaborated on those themes. These major themes ultimately guided the researcher to perform the analysis. The information written down under different themes were used to develop the findings of quantitative analysis.

Figure 3.5 Analytical procedure of qualitative data



Compiled from Spencer *et al.* (2003, p.212)

Table 3.6 Thematic framework for analysis

Theme label	Main themes
1	Demographic and socio-economic context of the study area and socio-economic characteristics of the migrants
2	Reasons for migration
3	Economic impacts of migration on families - positive
4	Economic impacts of migration on families - negative
5	Social impacts of migration on families - positive
6	Social impacts of migration on families - negative
7	Positive impacts on children
8	Negative impacts on children
9	Views regarding the decision of the government on banning female migration
10	Suggestions

3.7 Reflections of the research process

There are limitations for any research as highlighted in the Dane's quote at the beginning of this chapter. These limitations may occur in the stages of planning, fieldwork, analysis, and report writing. The researcher's experience in the involvement in almost all the activities of population censuses and national sample surveys in Sri Lanka made it easier to conduct the survey and FGDs without many difficulties. FGDs were successful because of the cooperation given by the Divisional secretaries and their subordinates. The questionnaire was well developed to address the research questions formulated. The questions were easy to understand and were unambiguous. Since 400 interviews had to be conducted within three months, the researcher was only able to conduct several interviews in the beginning and

passed the task to the interviewers. More attention was focussed on the supervision of interviews and editing the questionnaires in the field. Finding respondents was not a difficult problem since the interviewers received the fullest cooperation of Grama Niladharies (person in charge of GN Division, see Figure 3.4) and the people in the study area. Once an interview was completed, interviewers were able to find the next respondent without any difficulty. Cooperation given by the respondents is also highly encouraging. No problems have been encountered at the data analysis stage since the researcher carefully did editing, coding, and data entry.

3.8 Conclusion

A mixed methodological approach has been employed and its relevance for the study has been argued based on the different paradigms. Different ontological, epistemological, and methodological positions have been discussed to justify the choice of the approach. A short theoretical note as the premise for helping to orient the analysis of the study and a detailed description of the data collection and analysis procedures has been provided. The next chapter will discuss transnational theorising of migration, the movement from traditional theories to transnational theories in incorporating gender and transnational aspects of international migration.

CHAPTER 4

TRANSNATIONAL THEORISING OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

While many theories of migration have been elaborated by academics from different fields - in particular economics, geography and sociology - they are fragmented and no dominant paradigm has been established. Moreover, migration studies developed in the epoch of nationalism, and most migration research was linked to specific national assumptions on migration and minorities. One of the major challenges for migration researchers today is that the process has become multi-layered and dynamic- taking on new forms, involving new populations and destinations, and adapting to the ever changing global context.

(International Migration Institute – IMI 2006, p.3)

4.1 Introduction

International migration is ‘moulded by and helps to mould’ the global processes of social, economic, and political transformations (IMI 2006, p.1). With the transformations in global social, economic and political processes, the global migration system has been changed over the last 100 years (IMI 2006; Skeldon 2003b). The transformation of the global migration system has raised new challenges for scholars encouraging them to investigate the current complexities of international migration. However, as some scholars (IMI 2006; Massey *et al.* 1998; Stahl 1995) argue this transformation and the current complexities are being poorly addressed by the existing migration theories. This chapter presents a brief review of some of the traditional theories of international labour migration and explores the importance of incorporating gender and transnationalism perspectives in migration theories. The chapter then develops a theoretical framework, which explains the impacts of migration of Sri Lankan females on families and children followed by a conclusion.

4.2 The transformation of global migration system

The transformation of the global migration system is diverse and complex. Building on the idea of IMI (2006, p.1), the global migration transformations are categorised into four inter related arenas: growing complexities, migration transitions, diverse communities and transnational lives, and policy environment, which include gendered and transnational perspective of migration as shown in Figure 4.1. This figure shows that the growing complexity of migration is because of the changes in the nature of migration, migration destinations, motivations of migration, globalisation of labour market etc. There is a transition

Figure 4.1 Inter-related arenas of global migration transition

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 87 of the print copy of
the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Compiled from IMI (2006, p.1)

of the global migration system over the last 100 years (Skeldon 2003, 2003b). This is a result of the increasing complexities and dynamics of migration, migration transitions, transnationalism, and policy intervention in international migration. International migration is complex since there are changes in the types of migrations such as permanent, temporary, refugee etc., changes in motivations, and the modes of migration and technical advancements

that facilitate migration in association with globalisation. Furthermore, there are changes in the migration system because of the transformations of the labour sending countries to labour receiving countries and vice versa, and the transitions in the global demographic, social, and economic processes. For example, there are structural changes in the economies, and changes in the growth of labour force and social development. Economic restructuring and the transitions of demographic and social settings of countries have resulted in migration transitions. Moreover, international migration has been feminised (UNFPA-IOM 2006; Abella 2005; Asis 2005a), and a transnational perspective of migration have emerged (Levitt and Jarworsky 2007; Levitt 2004). Therefore, economic and political transformations have brought social diversities of migration. Consequently, many governments have introduced policies that encourage or discourage international migration for employment.

Although many theories of international migration have been developed since the middle of the twentieth century, there are drawbacks to these theories in addressing the current complexities of migration (IMI 2006; Massey *et al.* 1998; Stahl 1995). As Boyd and Grieco (2003, p.3) argue, two significant drawbacks of these existing theories are the failure to adequately address gendered migration experiences and to help us understand the circumstances that encourage women to become transnational migrants. Moreover, these theories have focused mainly on the causes of migration rather than the consequences of migration (Massey *et al.* 1993; Stahl 1995).

International migration has become gender specific with the feminisation of migration (De Silva 2006; Piper 2005; Chammartin 2004b; Boyd and Grieco 2003; Wright 2000) and transnational since:

the dramatic improvements in transportation and communications have enabled migrants to sustain, develop, and reproduce their social, political, cultural, and economic links across national borders, creating transnational identities, networks and livelihoods (IMI 2006, p.5).

Moreover, scholarly attention has focused towards examining the international migration of women in relation to the family (Shaw 2008a; Yeoh and Lam 2007; Parrenas 2005a, 2002; Asis *et al.* 2004; Zlotnik 1995). Consequently, as Boyd and Grieco (2003, p.1) argue, the phrase "migrants and their families", which has been used to describe "male migrants and their wives and children" in the 1960s and early 1970s, has currently changed to "women migrants

and their families and children”. Although Massey *et al.* (1993, p.432) emphasise that ‘there is no single, coherent theory of international migration’, they argue that it is an impractical task to propose such a theory because of the diversity of international migration in terms of the type, motivations, direction, and the consequences of migration, and its gender specificity and transnational perspective. However, the incorporation of gender and transnational perspective of migration in theories has become important in examining the current international migration scenario.

4.3 Traditional theoretical approaches to labour migration

Migration theories have been proposed from time to time to describe the contemporary issues of international labour migration. The groundwork for these theories was the model developed by Ravenstein (1885) and extended by Lee (1966). Ravenstein (1885) formulated the model, the laws of migration, based on geographical distance. This model has explicitly accepted the notion of incorporating gender as a variable with the finding of ‘females are more migratory than males’ at least over short distances (Ravenstein 1885, p.199). Although Ravenstein included this finding as a law in the paper on “Laws of migration”, Wright (2000) emphasises that the inclusion of gender as a variable has been ignored in migration studies or in migration theories. Reusing the laws of migration, Lee (1966) developed the theory of migration by adding additional demographic and economic indicators. Lee’s theory of migration (1966) involves a set of “push” factors at origin, “pull” factors at destination, “intervening obstacles”, and a series of “personal factors”. According to this theory, migration does not seem to occur only because of “push” factors or “pull” factors but because of a combination of all these factors. The decision to migration is, therefore, ‘never completely rational, and for some persons the rational component is much less than the irrational’ (Lee 1966, p.51). Although this theory did not attempt to discuss these factors in relation to the migration of men and women separately, there is no doubt about the validity of the theory in explaining the current decision process of female migrants. However, the theory does not generalise the contemporary migration complexities (Pessar and Mahler 2001).

In “The hypotheses of mobility transition”, Zelinsky (1971) has applied the principles of the spatial innovation to the laws of migration and has integrated demographic, geographic, and historical factors. Despite its limited theoretical reflections, the theory provides some important contributions to better understand spatial mobility in relation to demographic factors

and the modernisation phenomenon of international migration. A variety of models have been proposed thereafter in the field of labour migration to explain the causes of migration using different concepts and assumptions (Massey *et al.* 1993). In these theories, as Massey *et al.* (1993, p.433) explain, causal processes of migration have been conceptualised at different levels: individual, family, national, and international. In the studies of Massey *et al.* (1998, 1993), they review and evaluate leading theories of labour migration in relation to the current complexities of migration.

The literature identifies two distinct theoretical approaches to explain international migration: neoclassical/equilibrium and structural approaches. While North American scholars rely mostly on the first approach, the latter was developed by social scientists in Latin America and Africa in response to the difficulties encountered in applying it to analyse migration in developing countries (Wood 1982). In the neoclassical framework, as Wood (1982, p.300) shows:

population movement is conceptualised as the geographical mobility of workers who are responding to imbalances in the spatial distribution of land, labour, capital, and natural resources.

The assumption of the micro theory of neoclassical economics is that individual migrants respond to economic disparities between the areas of origin and destination in a rational manner with the objective of maximising utility (Massey *et al.* 1998). Hence, the focus of these analysts is exclusively on economic disparities (Teitelbaum 2008). According to this perspective, migration was seen as the outcome of individual decisions, and therefore, the individual migrant is the key explanatory factor for migration. These migrants estimate the costs and benefits of migration and they migrate only if they can expect a positive net return from their movement (Teitelbaum 2008; Wright 2000; Massey *et al.* 1993). In other words, labour moves from places where labour is plentiful and capital is scarce to the places where labour is scarce and capital is abundant, and it is the distribution of resources from places of low productivity to the places of high productivity (Semyonov and Gorodzeisky 2005; Wood 1982). In contrast, the macro theory of neoclassical economics views migration as a means of establishing equilibrium between labour supply and demand (Massey *et al.* 1993). People stop moving when the differences in the labour supply and demand are diminished (Teitelbaum 2008; Massey *et al.* 1993).

The neoclassical theories have been criticised by several scholars. For example, Battistella (2003, p.2) highlights drawbacks of neoclassical theories as indicated in the following quote:

..... That approach was based on the idea that migrants are rational people who make rational choices and that migration decisions are based mostly on responses to wage differentials (real or expected) between countries. Presented in different terms, such an approach emphasises the so-called push and pulls factors, and examines the intervening obstacles to explain why people move. The movement of people will cease when differentials diminish, and as conditions at the points of origin and destination tend towards equilibrium. The longevity of such an approach rests on the immediate understanding of the dynamics of migration that it provides. However, critics have emphasised that the model leaves too many aspects unexplained. In particular, it does not explain why there is so little migration from countries that present all conditions for migration, why some people who share the same conditions as migrants do not go abroad, why migration takes certain directions and not others, and why migration persists beyond the time when it is very advantageous.

The major empirical problem of this approach as illustrated by Stahl (1995) is the lack of concentration in migration policies that significantly restrict or facilitate migration flows. Stahl (1995) further argues that factors associated with the area of origin and destination countries, that are not solely economic, influence the direction and the form of migration. Massey *et al.* (1998, p.8) have also identified several drawbacks of the neoclassical theory of migration in explaining the commonplace observations in the post-industrial world since the economic disparities in the areas of origin and destination alone are not enough to explain international movement. The commonplace observations of Massey *et al.* (1998, p.8) and the validity of these observations in relation to female labour migration is shown in Table 4.1. Reasons for migration have become diversified, and both the economic and social consequences of migration have become more significant. The factors associated with the causes and consequences are different between women and men. Moreover, many of the contemporary migrants have become transnational. Therefore, neoclassical theories alone do not seem to be useful in explaining the current complexities of international migration.

However, many theories have been developed based on the neoclassical approach with different views. Harris-Todaro (1970), Todaro (1969), and Lewis (1954) argue that wage differences between regions are a determinant in migration. Lewis (1954) further argues that there is a transfer labour from the labour abundant and non-capitalist sector to the labour scarce and capitalist sector of the economy because of the possibilities for unskilled labour to

earn higher wages in the modern sector than in the traditional sector. Elaborating the concept of the neoclassical approach, the model of Harris-Todaro (1970) explains that the migration is motivated by the desire for individual income maximisation by comparing the costs and benefits of migration at origin and destination. According to these models, the disparities existing between the areas of origin and destination are sufficient to generate migration flows. These theories also do not explain the current complexities of migration.

Table 4.1 The validity of the observations of Massey *et al.* (1998) in the analysis of female labour migration

Observations of Massey <i>et al.</i> (1998, p.8)	Validity of these observations in the analysis of female labour migration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Whereas one less developed country may have a high rate of emigration, its similarly developed neighbour may not 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Countries with high levels of female unemployment, poverty and surplus labour do not migrate with equal proportions. This is reflected in the migration of females in the Asian region.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Migrants do not always go to places where wages are highest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ There is a variation in wages for female labour depending on the skill component, education, destination country, the experiences of migrant workers, ethnicity etc. Moreover, there are non-economic factors, which restrict females to migrate to places where wages are highest.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Migration often ceases before wage disparities disappear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Due to the non-economic factors at the origin and destination, females have to cease their migration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Migration at times occurs in the absence of wage disparities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Female migration occurs not only due to economic reasons but also due to non-economic reasons, therefore, wage disparities are not the only concern of migrants

The focus of structural theories is ‘processes, contemporary and historical, which initiate direct and sustain immigration flows’ (Stahl 1995, p.213). According to these theories, migration is caused by the outcome of broad economic, social, and political changes (Stahl 1995). However, as Wood (1982) explains, unlike the macroeconomic model, it is difficult to summarise this historical-structural approach. One reason given for this difficulty is ‘that the historical-structural approach is found to be in a variety of models’ (Wood 1982, p.301). These approaches include dependency theory, internal colonialism, the centre-periphery framework, and global accumulation (Wood 1982, p.301). As Wood (1982, p.306) further emphasises, this approach paid ‘scant attention to the factors that motivate individual migrants’ and is ‘less effective in identifying the specific costs and benefits, that may affect both the propensity to migrate and the direction of the migratory stream’ (Portes 1978 as cited in Wood 1982, p.307). However, all these views suggest that the structural changes induce population movement rather than individual motivations.

In addition to these two approaches, a third approach of migration has been identified in the literature referred to as the structuration model, which was introduced based on the concept “structuration”²⁹ (Giddens 1976). This model ‘privileges neither agency nor structure as explanatory factors but their complex interaction’ (Wright 2000, p.5). In this approach, as argued by Chant and Radcliffe (1992, p.19), migration is determined by:

the structural causes of labour market formation and uneven spatial distribution that are combined with an awareness of the highly selective individual responses of Third World inhabitants who are often faced with a limited number of strategies to utilise for survival.

The creation of jobs for women result in ‘social-spatial restructuring’, and it is the focus of the structuralist approach (Chant and Radcliffe 1992, p.1).

A variety of theoretical models has been developed in response to the drawbacks of the neoclassical theories and the use of a push-pull framework to explain the changing complexities of international movement. Unlike the micro theory of neoclassical economics, the new economics of migration assume the decision to migrate is not made by individuals but by families or households (Massey *et al.* 1998). The new economics of migration views

²⁹ Structuration is a concept employed by Antony Giddens ‘to express the mutual dependency, rather than opposition, of human agency and social structure’ (Wright 2000, p.3).

migration as a household decision to maximise the household income and minimise risk while considering the markets other than the labour (Massey *et al.* (1993). In this situation also, families take the decision to migrate by rationally calculating the costs and benefits of migration (Teitelbaum 2008).

Reviewing household theory, Semyonov and Gorodzeisky (2004 p.47) explains, labour migration is ‘an economic strategy exercised by the household to allocate human resources rationally in order to increase the flows of income and to decrease the scope of economic risks’. According to them, these economic strategies of households could be different from one social setting to another as well as over time. Despite variations in household strategies and in migration patterns, researchers have agreed that members of the household take action collectively to maximise household earnings and to decrease economic risks. In other words, as Semyonov and Gorodzeisky (2004) and Massey *et al.* (1993) argue household members make an effort to increase the economic situation for the benefit of all members of the household. From this perspective, according to Semyonov and Gorodzeisky (2004, p.48):

labour migrants leave their homes in search of temporary jobs in host countries in order to support family members in the countries of origin with no intention to stay permanently in the host country.

This perception is more realistic in the case of female migrants.

In contrast to neoclassical theory and the new economics of migration, in dual labour market theory, ‘push factors predominate over pull factors’ (Teitelbaum 2008, p.55), and migration occurs due to the labour demands of modern industrial societies (Massey *et al.* 1998). Due to the ‘dissatisfaction with the push-pull framework and neoclassical economic explanations for migration’ (Massey *et al.* 1998, p.16), many theories such as dual market theory, social capital theory, cumulative causation, migration systems theory, world systems theory, network theory, institutional theory etc. have been developed to explain different aspects of migration. The spread of migrant networks, the development of institutions supporting transnational movements, the changes of the social meaning of network in the receiving countries, labour demand arising from modern industrial societies, and natural migrations occur due to the capitalist development are some of the aspects taken into consideration in these theories (Massey *et al.* 1998).

The failure of the existing theories in addressing the current complexity of international migration has been discussed and argued by several scholars, for example, Battistella (2003), Massey *et al.* (1998, 1993), and Stahl (1995). Reviewing and evaluating some of the leading theories of international migration, Massey *et al.* (1998, 1993) laid the groundwork for necessary empirical work of migration theories highlighting some of their drawbacks leading to the continuous international migration flows across time and space. However:

historical frameworks that offer universal explanations, immutable laws, and timeless regularities are not very helpful in trying to understand new patterns of international migration movement (Massey *et al.* 1998, p.3).

The migration of Sri Lankan women as domestic workers is a result of a combination of factors highlighted in theories discussed above although gender as a variable has not been taken into consideration in all these theories. However, no single theory exists to explain current migration complexities. Therefore, it is important to develop a theoretical framework, which integrates the concepts of existing theories to explain the transnational perspective of female migration in relation to their families. However, more and more scholars, for example, Piper (2008), Donato *et al.* (2006), Pessar and Mahler (2001), and Basch *et al.* (1994) have started to examine gendered and transnational perspectives of international migration.

4.4 Bringing women in: an overview of current theory

Studying the movement of women separately from men has become important for a number of reasons (Hugo 2006, p.73):

- the patterns differ from those of men;
- the causes and consequences of movement differ from those of men; and
- the policy implications of movement can differ from those of men.

Earlier studies of migration focused exclusively on male labour migrants (Donato *et al.* 2006; Piper 2005; Chammartin 2004b). These studies have been conducted:

on the assumption that men are the decision makers in the migration process and women are tied movers, or, if women migrate alone, they follow the same routes, are motivated by similar considerations, and experience the same consequences as do male migrants (Lauby and Stark, 1988, p.473).

This perception has changed over time, and since the 1970s, migration scholars began to include women in migration research (De Silva 2006). Gradually, more and more research on migration has incorporated gender as a variable, and scholarship with a more feminist angle (Pessar 1999; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Chant and Radcliffe 1992).

UN (2005, p.15) highlights the incorporation of gender perspective in migration as described in the following quote:

A gender perspective on international migration thus explicitly recognises that gender is a core organising principle of social relations, including hierarchical relations, and shapes the migration experiences of women and men. A gender perspective goes beyond the differences between women and men in relation to migration behaviours - such as the likelihood of migrating or the type of migration - and focuses explicitly on the inequalities that also exist. Incorporating gender perspectives into analyses advances understanding of the different and often unequal experiences of women and men in migration, and facilitates formulation of interventions that take into account the needs, priorities and contributions of women as well as men.

Research work of Piper (2008, 2005) and Donato *et al.* (2006) has also shown that gender is a crucial factor in understanding the causes and consequences of migration. Not only the factors associated with the area of destination and origin but also the policies of sending and receiving countries may influence the gendered patterns of migration (Piper 2008). The recognition of the importance of gender in migration studies led to an increasing numbers of studies focussing on women's migration flows and experiences (Wills and Yeoh 2000). This focus on women led to 'an expansion in the areas of research interest moving away from structural approaches based on labour markets and economic sphere, to micro level studies' (Wills and Yeoh 2000, p.xi).

Although gender has long been recognised as an important variable in migrant selectivity, 'female migration only recently has been included within the rubric of general migration theories' (Tacoli 1999, pp.660), and existing theories have not been adjusted to understand this new phenomenon of female migration. Migration theories may differ 'in their approach to agency and structure' (Wright 2000, p.4), but their similarity in terms of gender blindness has long been remarked upon (Piper 2005; Semyonov and Gorodzeisky 2004; Boyd and Grieco 2003; Chant 1992).

The use of neoclassical theory, structural theory, and structuration model in the analysis of female migration was well explored by Chant (1992). According to them, the neoclassical theory is useful as it explains the movement of females with few employment opportunities to urban areas from rural areas. However, as Chant and Radcliffe (1992) note, the dissimilarities between the migration motivations of males and females were not recognised in these models. In some models, for example, the models of Thadani and Todaro (1984, 1979), gender differentiating factors have included. Criticisms for the gender blindness of this approach are of three types (Chant and Radcliffe 1992, p.20):

- failure to address women adequately as a heterogenous group since different groups of women migrate in distinct migration flows and the neglect of class, cultural background and stages in the life cycle;
- failure to consider the social factors, which condition participation in migration flows; and
- the treatment of women sometimes as a special group whose participation in migration flows needs to be explained, whereas male migrations seen as relatively unproblematic and reducible to wage rate differentials.

Because of these factors, according to Chant and Radcliffe (1992, p.20), this approach is considered as “female aware”, not as “gender aware”. Wright (2000) outlines the changes in gender and migration theory proposing that Giddens’ structuration approach (1976) provides an excellent theoretical base for examining gender and migration. Several scholars in examining the gendered phenomenon of migration have used this approach, for example, Wright (2000) has used it in the context of South Africa and De Silva (2006) in the context of Sri Lanka. As Wright (2000, p.778) explains in the Southern African context:

the crucial differences between neoclassical and structuralist models were their opposite sides of the structure-agency dichotomy, and the similarity was their failure to recognise for gender.

Similarly, in examining gender and household migration in the United States, Halfacree (1995) has also used strutation theory to highlight how migration takes place within the household and labour market.

In all these theories, two aspects of labour have been taken into account: the supply of, and demand for, migrant labour. There are variations in these aspects between men and women. Moreover, neither of these macro models nor the micro models provides a satisfactory approach to explain a variety of commonplace observations in international migration scenario of females (Massey *et al.* 1998, p.8). Several of these observations are shown below:

- There is an excess of female labour in developing countries relative to the developed countries;
- In some female labour surplus countries, more females migrate to work overseas, whereas the other countries with similar labour surplus may not;
- Within countries, females who emigrate tend to be selected from specific groups;
- Females do not always migrate to the countries where the wages are highest. The country of destination is decided by a combination of factors such as policies of the countries of origin and destination, ability to finance migration, personal networks etc.;
- Even before wage disparities disappear migration may cease due to some other reasons;
- In addition to the economic motivations, the decision to migrate is determined by non economic factors and structural changes of the economy;
- Many of the female labour migrants are unskilled workers and unemployed before the migration and therefore, they do not always estimate the costs and benefits of their migration;
- For some women, their decision to migrate is independent, but for some women, it is a family decision; and
- The duration of work abroad is not determined by the equalisation of but by the attainment of bearable conditions of life in areas of origin.

As illustrate by Semyonov and Gorodzeisky (2005) and Boyd and Grieco (2003), the literature on migrant women and gender differences in migration processes has grown rapidly despite the criticisms regarding gender blindness in migration theories. These studies stress the unique role play by gender in the migration process, and migrant women are often viewed as

independent social actors. That is, when women cross international borders to take a job in the global market, they are making decisions, taking actions, and redefining their family and labour roles (Parrenas 2001b, 2000; Pessar 1999). Many of these studies suggest that the feminisation of transnational migration has been prompted by rising global demand for labour in specific female type domestic jobs and occupations (Semyonov and Gorodzeisky 2005). Some referred to the feminisation of labour migration as the globalisation of domestic labour or globalisation of childcare (Raijman *et. al.* 2003; Hochschild 2000b).

The time has come to bring women into migration theories. However, as Boyd and Grieco (2003, p.1) pointed out, it remains only partially achieved for a variety of reasons. On one hand, understanding migration and constructing useful theories must take into account many different types of migration. On the other hand, developing a gendered theory of migration has been difficult because the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, political science, economics, and demography have tended to focus only on a few types of migration and stress different explanations. Therefore, what is needed is a general theoretical framework that guides research and helps explain the unique experiences of both males and females at all stages of the migration process relating to transnational perspective.

4.5 From migrant to transmigrant: theorising transnational migration

Transnational migration is not new; in the past, as Levitt and Jarworsky (2007) and Levitt (2004) explained, not only European immigrants returned to their home countries but also maintained contacts with their homeland. In addition, return migration and periodic visits to home communities have also taken place at least among labour migrants (Portes *et al.* 1999). What is new about transnational migration is the ease of transportation and communication, remittance flows, increasing dependence on remittances by sending countries, and the interference of governments in managing migration (Levitt 2004). Advancements in transportation and communication technologies that link places and people globally have led to the emergence of a “transnational migration space” (IOM 2007). However, not all migrants are transnational migrants (Levitt *et al.* 2003). While some migrants are focused more on their countries of origin, others are focused on host countries (Levitt 2004). Some migrants engage in transnational activities on a regular basis and others do not. However, it is only recently that transnational migration has caught the eye of migration scholars (Portes *et al.* 1999).

The discovery of transnational practices among migrants by a group of anthropologists, Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Christina Blanc-Szanton, led to the documentation of various aspects of this phenomenon (Portes 2001). They defined transnationalism as the ‘processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies and settlement’, and transnational migrants as ‘those who develop and maintain multiple relationships - familial, economic, social, organisational, religious, and political - that span borders’ (Basch *et al.* 1994, p.7). The operation of these processes lead to “transnational communities” defined by ‘a set of intense cross border social relations that enable individuals to participate in the activities of daily life in two or more nations’ (Portes 1996, p.75). These transnational migrants maintain not only economic but also social relationships within a transnational space. Apart from physical movements, the flow of information, skills, and remittances are the other components of the “transnational migration space” (IOM 2007). Research work of Parrenas (2005b; 2001a) and Asis *et al.* (2004) have also shown how transmigrants make regular contacts with their home communities. These contacts include regular phone calls, sending gifts, regular remitting, undergoing sudden trips for a range of reason such as poor health of family members, to attend funerals and festivals, and participating in the decision making process with the emergence of transnational families. However, as Portes (2001, p.182) pointed out:

the concept of transnationalism did not provide a new perspective on contemporary migratory movements and generated a novel set of hypotheses about their patterns of settlement and adaptation at variance with established models.

The following quote of Levitt *et al.* (2003, p.565), emphasises the recognition of transnational perspective in current international migration environment:

The recognition that some migrants maintain strong, enduring ties to their homelands even as they are incorporated into countries of resettlement calls into question conventional assumptions about the direction and impacts of international migration. At the same time, the significance of such “transmigrants” for migration studies is strongly debated. Some critics doubt that transnational practices are widespread or very influential. Others contend that migrants’ transnational practices are not new and that, as in the past, they will diminish over time among migrants and be of little significance for their children. Still others charge that the findings from the primarily case study-based research on transnational migration are often exaggerated or skewed. Resolving these debates is made even more

difficult because what is meant by “transnationalism” and what should and should not be included under its rubric are not always clear.

As this quotation highlights, migration scholars have recognised that most contemporary migrants maintain a variety of ties with their “home” countries. It also shows that these transnational ties vary across countries, types and the direction of migration.

Schuerkens (2005) examines the transformation of gender relations due to transnational migrations among Bangladesh women. Levitt and Jaworsky (2007) explore past developments and future trends of transnational migration studies since they have recognised that many contemporary migrants maintain various kinds of ties with their families and countries of origin at the same time they work abroad. Tyner (2002) investigates how transnational labour migration influences the migrant’s identities and familial relations. However, it is evident that transnational perspective reveal new insights into international migration although one of the principal criticisms of using this approach to international migration is that new labels are being applied to an old process (Levitt and Jarworsky 2007; Levitt *et al.* 2003; Al-Ali and Koser 2002). Al-Ali and Koser (2002, pp.2-3) categorise these new insights of transnational perspective into three ways:

First, it highlights processes that have largely been ignored in international migration. For example, the focus of the attention on the utilisation of modes of telecommunication and transport, their pooling of resources and successful exploitation of global markets, and their association with new social forms, political challenges and cultural resources generated by linkages across several geographical locations. Second, it focuses on new or different forms of international migration through its interaction with contemporary form of globalisation. For example, migrants have found it possible to have multiple localities and identities since the improvement in transport and electronic communications. This has resulted in a movement of family and kinship ties largely from local to a global scale. In turn, the volume of migrant remittances has grown rapidly and the use of remittances has also diversified. Third, it helps to restructure the relationship between “home” and “host society” since the volume and density of family and kin-based economic transactions enlarged.

Transnational theorising of migration has begun its development with the recognition that the conventional migration theories did not adequately address the current transnational migration practices (Basch *et al.* 1994). According to traditional migration theories, migrants are just treated as persons who leave the country and come back after some years. Migrants are not treated as individuals with manifold attachments with their families and the countries of origin

(Levitt and Nyberg-Sorensen 2004). This transnational migration generates two distinct categories of experience: those who actually migrate and those who are left behind but receive support from those who migrate. Indeed, most Sri Lankan migrant domestic workers are transnational migrants since they belong to two cultures and two countries and maintain their contacts with families through monetary and social remittances, and other communications. Their migration has given rise to transnational families, or families with members located in different locations.

4.6 Bridging gender, transnationalism, and domestic worker migration

Although Ravenstein (1885) noted that women are more migratory than men, most research in the twentieth century, especially up to the early 1970s, focused exclusively on male migrants and women were perceived as the companions of migrant men (Piper 2005; Chammartin. 2004b; Pessar and Mahler 2003). However, the predominance of females in transnational migratory flows has been discussed in different angles, and is well documented by several scholars since the 1970s (for example, Piper 2008; Boyd and Grieco 2003). Moreover, Pessar and Mahler (2003) attempt to bring gender into migration research with a special transnational focus by expanding their original framework of 2000. However, for many years, in migration theories, researchers have analysed the determinants of migration independent of its impact (Taylor 1999). According to Taylor (1999), the models that explain the determinants of migration do not explain the impacts of migration on sending communities although the factors that determine migration are also likely to influence the outcomes of migration. Todaro (1969) and Harris and Todaro (1970), in their economic models of migration do not consider economic impacts of migration as well. As argued by Massey *et al.* (1998, p.3), about ten years ago, researchers analysed and explained international migration using the theoretical concepts developed primarily in the industrial era. These concepts reflect the economic and social arrangements of the periods where these theories were developed. Some of them can be applied to current migration circumstances and others cannot. However, there is a rapid growth in research on international mobility of people and they use these theories, which do not have a common conceptual framework.

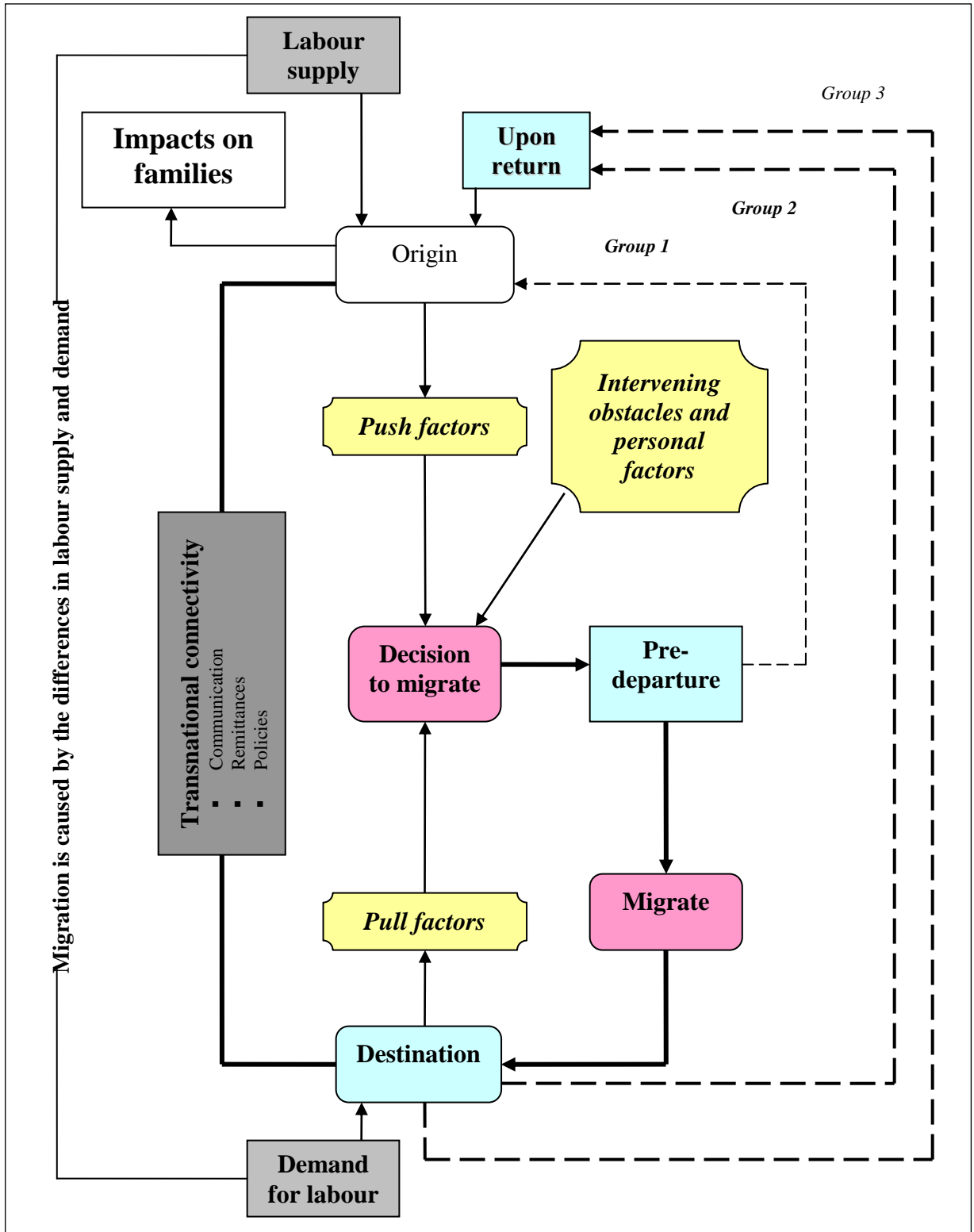
Female migration is complex, complicated, and multi-sided, and the use of a single theory is hard to cover all aspects (De Silva 2006; Boyd and Grieco 2003). Existing theories of international migration have been criticised for their simplicities but also the limitations in

understanding both causes and consequences of migration and their drawbacks in explaining the current complexities of migration, especially the gender and transnational perspectives of migration. However, it is possible to develop a theory by further developing the push-pull theory of migration and by adding the concepts proposed by other theorists that are useful to understand the migration process of women. Therefore, a theoretical framework, which can incorporate women and transnational perspective of migration, is developed to explain the migration process of Sri Lankan women as domestic workers as shown in Figure 4.2. This proposed framework identifies three stages of migration: pre-departure, at the destination and upon return, based on the analyses of Dias and Jayasundere (2004b), Boyd and Grieco (2003), and Abu-Habib (1998).

As shown in the Figure 4.2, migration is caused by the differences in labour supply and demand (Massey *et al.* 1998). However, the availability of labour alone is not sufficient to make decisions to migrate. It can be the decision of the migrant or family members and it is influenced by a variety of other factors. There are dissimilarities of these factors between men and women. In Sri Lanka, factors such as higher unemployment of women, unemployment of their husbands, economic hardships, and the unavailability of job opportunities are more influential than wage differentials between the home and host country. The women who were employed before their migration (Battistella 2003; Harris-Todaro 1970; Todaro 1969; Lewis 1954) considered wage differentials. In addition, non-economic factors such as their family problems, the responsibilities as mothers and housewives, structural changes in the economy, and policy decisions also influence the migration decisions of women.

Not only the factors associated with the area of origin but pull factors in the area of destination also need to be considered in the migration of women. The nature of work, salary differences, immigration laws, and the country of destination are of utmost importance among these factors. The migration decision is made only after weighing both these push and pull factors. Once the decision is made but before the departure, women migrants face some other obstacles. Among these are financial difficulties, preparing the relevant documents, and childcare arrangements that are explained in Chapter 5. Moreover, the personal factors are of the great importance because, some of these migrants are generally resistant to change of any

Figure 4.2 Theoretical framework for the explanation of the migration process of Sri Lankan domestic workers overseas



kind, especially to a change of residence, while others are not eager for such a change. UN (2005) reports that there is an increasing understanding that an individual's decision to migrate is influenced not only by her agency but also by her family membership, social groups, migration networks as well as the economic or political conditions of the country (UN 2005). Therefore, the decisions to migrate are made in response to a combination of demographic, economic and social factors at the origin and destination. If these women find it difficult to overcome these intervening obstacles they may take the decision not to migrate, and they belong to Group 1 according to this framework.

Women who overcome intervening obstacles may migrate hoping that they can adapt to the new working environment. However, unlike men and other women who migrate for non-domestic work, these domestic workers are recognised as a vulnerable group. They are usually faced with different kinds of difficulties. Women who can overcome these difficulties remain at the destination until their contract period is over. Some others may return to Sri Lanka due to personal or non-personal reasons. They are the women of Group 2 and can be considered as failures of migration. Group 3 includes women who would return to the country of origin after the completion of their contract period. It is evident that all women who take the decision to migrate do not migrate. Women of Group 1 take the decision to migrate but do not migrate due the intervening obstacles. Women of Group 2 migrate but return home before the contract period is over. This indicates the complexity of the migration process, and in this study, only the women of Groups 2 and 3 are taken into consideration. However, the impact of migration of women of Group 2 may vary from those women of Group 3.

Transnational ties as well as the facilities they use to communicate with their families are also important for these female migrants since they want to return, in most cases at least for some time, to Sri Lanka or to maintain intimacy across borders. Moreover, they make their daily lives, activities, and relations across national boundaries (Dannecker 2005). The duration of transnational relations of these women is under threat because of the problems they face at the destination and the problems they face when they leave their loved ones behind at home. Even if their period of stay abroad is short, they are involved in a variety of transnational activities, for example, sending money home, communication with family members, and visiting Sri Lanka during the contract period. For some women, migration has become part of their daily life as they do not migrate just for a few years but do it repeatedly. The migration of women

has increased rapidly. Thus, the members of Sri Lankan families are dispersed between countries. Consequently, the concept of family changes when it can no longer be connected to one dwelling, one country of origin and patriarchal concept of a family. While migrants face challenging situations being a stranger to the host country, transnational families actively construct their daily lives despite the difficulties they face. However, ultimately, the impacts of migration on families and children become a function of a combination of factors.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed some of the traditional theories of labour migration and has examined the utility of those theories in analysing the current complexity of international migration. It is recognised that there has been an inattentiveness of those theories on female labour migration and the transnational aspects of migration. Due to the complexity of contemporary migration, it is not possible to propose a single theory, which incorporates every aspect of migration. Therefore, a theoretical framework has been proposed to explain the migration process of Sri Lankan females who migrate overseas as domestic workers. Migration is a typical part of economic and social relations of people. It should not be treated as a problem, and therefore, theories of migration should be proposed enabling the scholars to analyse the dynamics of migration. With a theoretical background of the study topic, the next chapter describes the migration process of Sri Lankan domestic workers overseas.

CHAPTER 5

MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS: BEFORE DEPARTURE AND AT THE DESTINATION

There are three distinct stages [of migration] where gender relations, roles and hierarchies influence the migration process and produce different outcomes for women: the pre-migration stage, the transition across state borders and the experiences of migrants in the receiving country.

(Boyd and Grieco 2003, p.3)

5.1 Introduction

Migrant domestic workers pass through different stages in their migration journey from Sri Lanka to the countries in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Pre-departure, during transit, at the destination, and upon return are the stages of the migration process identified by authors who have sought to incorporate the gender aspect into international migration and have investigated the experiences of migrant women in the migration process (Jolly and Reeves 2005; Piper 2005; Dias and Jayasundere 2004b; Boyd and Grieco 2003; Abu-Habib 1998). In each stage of the migration journey of these women, they acquire different experiences and confront different kinds of problems (Ghosh 2009; Piper 2005; Chammartin 2004a; Dias and Jayasundere 2004b; Boyd and Grieco 2003). The experiences they acquire and the way they respond to the difficulties they confront generate various outcomes at the end of their journey. They can be different from the experiences of, and the problems faced by, the domestic workers of other countries as well as women who migrate for non-domestic work. Moreover, migration experiences of men and women can be different in some situations, in particular, recruitment procedures, preparation for migration, working conditions abroad, and family responsibilities.

Women who migrate for the first time may find more difficulties than women with some migration experience. Therefore, it is important that potential migrants be aware of the proper recruitment procedures and the facilities that are provided by the SLBFE. A lack of awareness of such procedures may lead to unsuccessful migration or a migration with dreadful experiences (Kottegoda 2006; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Abu-Habib 1998). Awareness of proper recruitment procedures, on one hand, directs them to obtain pre-departure training and insurance cover. The training they receive allows migrant women to acquire knowledge in

handling electronic appliances, different customs and cultures abroad, protection mechanisms, etc. It also helps the migrants who have problems in financing migration to use proper channels such as banking services without seeking money at higher interest rates from moneylenders (Shaw 2008a; Eelens 1995). On the other hand, the awareness of migration procedures helps them to maintain contacts with the SLBFE and the government representatives in the destination countries in the case of emergencies. In addition, planning for proper childcare arrangements before the departure is also an important issue to be considered by the migrant women.

In the destination countries, migrant women confront a different set of problems (Chammartin 2004a; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004; Abu-Habib 1998). These include non-payment of salaries, sexual, physical, and psychological harassment by the employers and other family members, excessive work and exhaustion, isolation, health risks, etc. (Al-Najjir 2004, p.28). However, the experiences of migrant women and the problems they face at these two stages of the migration process are influenced by a variety of other factors. Among them, migration policies of Sri Lanka and other destination countries, the status and roles of women in the family and society, the socio-economic levels of migrants and their families, labour laws of destination countries, working conditions abroad, the behaviour of migrants abroad, communication skills of migrants, and the efficiency of work are found to be more influential (Shaw 2008a; Dias and Jayasundere 2004b; Boyd and Grieco 2003; Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004; Abu-Habib 1998).

In examining the family impact of Sri Lankan domestic worker migration, three stages: pre-departure, at the destination and upon return are identified as being important. Many aspects that are related to the return of the migrant are discussed in Chapters 7 and 8. In this chapter, the issues that are found to be important in relation to pre-departure and destination stages are discussed. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the institutional structure of migration in Sri Lanka to explain how the Sri Lankan government assists the domestic workers to make their migration successful. It then explains the experiences and problems the migrants face before their departure and at their destinations followed by a conclusion. A few questions about financing migration, pre-departure training, childcare arrangements, nature of work overseas, income abroad, and the abuses that migrants may have faced were asked in the survey. Responses to these questions have been discussed and elaborated upon using the views

expressed in FGDs, through the findings of other studies done in Sri Lanka, and data gathered by the SLBFE.

5.2 The institutional structure of labour migration in Sri Lanka

With increasing international labour migration flows in the 1970s, the Sri Lankan government found it necessary to control and monitor migration. This has resulted in the establishment of governmental and non-governmental institutions to study, legislate, and administer these migration flows as well as to protect migrants. With the recognition of the increasing departures for overseas employment and the importance of remittances in the country's economic growth, the Foreign Employment Unit was established in the Department of Labour in 1976 with the purpose of finding employment opportunities abroad, organising and monitoring migration, and maintaining migration records (Korale 1983). Thereafter, according to the provision of the Foreign Employment Act No. 32 of 1980, several governmental functions and responsibilities for managing foreign employment have passed to private agencies but under government control (Gamburd 2000).

However, with the increase in the scale and complexity of migration for employment overseas, the Foreign Employment Unit found it difficult to organise and monitor all foreign employment activities, and therefore, the SLBFE was established in 1985 by the Foreign Employment Act No, 21 of 1985 (SLBE 2009). Since then, it has been functioning under the Ministry of Labour. Currently, there are several branches of the SLBFE and licensed recruiting agencies functioning under the supervision of the SLBFE (SLBFE 2009). In addition, there are Sri Lankan embassies and consular sections established in destination countries such as UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, and Lebanon. According to the Act of 1985, the main responsibilities of the SLBFE are to:

- investigate employment opportunities abroad;
- support, license, and regulate agencies;
- register migrants;
- ensure standards of contracts;
- conduct and supervise training programmes for migrants;
- observe the welfare and protection of Sri Lankans abroad;
- administer the compulsory insurance scheme;

- give information and guidance to the families of migrants;
- facilitate reintegration of returnees; and
- collect and disseminate data on migrants (SLBFE 2009; Shaw 2008a; Iredale *et al.* 2005; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Gamburd 2000).

Before entering the UN International Convention on the Protection of Rights of All Migrants and Members of their Family (ICMR), which came into force in 2003, the Act of 1985 was amended in 1994 to protect the migrant workers from illegal recruitment and problems that the migrants face before their departure and at destination. Compulsory registration and pre-departure training are the main concerns of these amendments (Iredale *et al.* 2005; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a). As Iredale *et al.* (2005, p.4) indicate, the following conditions that protect migrants' rights are not included in the Act:

- minimum standards for employment contracts;
- minimum working conditions or wages; and
- mechanism of responsibility regarding migrants' complaints.

Therefore, Iredale *et al.* (2005) argue that the Foreign Employment Act is useful for promoting migration as a means of income generation for the country and for the migrants' households but not for the protection of migrants. However, the recruitment of migrant workers is still in the hands of licensed agents in Sri Lanka and destination countries, and the protection of migrants at countries of destination is left in the hands of their employers (Iredale *et al.* 2005; Dias Jayasundere 2004a).

The compulsory registration of migrants came into operation in 1995, and as a result, registered migrants automatically received the SLBFE's Foreign Employment Insurance Policy (Gamburd 2000). Furthermore, by providing training for migrants, the SLBFE has taken every effort to make them aware of all aspects of the migration process including protection issues (Kottegoda 2006; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a). In addition, the SLBFE assist migrants by arranging bank loans at low interest rates to cover pre-departure costs, encouraging them to open bank accounts, and initiating re-integration programmes upon their return (Gamburd 2000). Although the SLBFE has attempted to make people aware of information and other services available from the Bureau, Gunatilleke (1998) reports that it is

doubtful whether the migrants have made full use of these services. However, obtaining correct information through formal or informal channels is important for persons seeking employment outside the country to make their migration a success.

The SLBFE in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of Labour has initiated several programmes to address the complaints of migrants, assist domestic workers who leave their employers' houses by providing shelter, give legal support in interactions with the police, and aid in repatriation (Kottegoda 2006; Gamburd; 2005; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a). To address the needs of the returnees and families left behind in Sri Lanka, the SLBFE has recently started a welfare scheme for migrants' families including a scholarship fund and childcare programmes for migrants' children, and plans to initiate low interest housing loans (SLBFE 2009). However, the opinion of Jayaweera *et al.* (2002) is that people's awareness of, and confidence in, the SLBFE's schemes is rather low.

In 1996, Sri Lanka ratified the ICMR. This came into force in 2003 when the 20th nation ratified the convention (Iredale *et al.* 2005). To have a noticeable effect, Gamburd (2005) strongly recommends that both sending and receiving countries must adhere to the standards of this convention, especially the protection of migrants from illegal activities, harassments, and abuse and exploitation at every stage of migration. However, it seems that the destination countries do not recognise the convention and therefore, migrants still experience exploitation and abuse abroad (Gamburd 2005; Al-Najjir 2004; Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004; Abu-Habib 1998).

5.3 Female domestic workers before the departure

Sri Lankan domestic workers face pressures and problems in preparing for migration that influence its success or failure (Gamburd 2005; Abu-Habib 1998). Before the decision is taken to migrate, migrants seek information in relation to job placement, recruitment procedures, and living conditions abroad. In these situations, migrant women depend heavily on informal networks in both the home country and host countries (SLBFE 2009; Gunatilleke 1998). Massey *et al.* (1993, p. 448) identify the networks of migrants as:

sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship and shared community origin.

As they show, these networks assist the migrants in reducing their costs and risks of migration and in achieving the expected outcomes of migration. Participants of FGDs in this study reported that the migrant workers have established networks with returned migrants and migrants working abroad. These networks have provided substantial support to the potential migrants in making aware all the procedures of migration. According to the views of FGD participants, some migrants have not been aware of formal recruiting procedures. Not only Sri Lankan women but also migrant domestic workers in other Asian countries also rely heavily on informal networks, and these networks have helped to have noticeable positive effects of migration on families in the origin countries. For instance, Filipino and Indonesian migrant women have maintained close relationships with other family members and friends working abroad (Asis 2005b; Hugo 2005c). In many instances, recommendations given by the women working abroad to their employers have been useful for the potential migrants to secure job overseas (Gamburd 2005).

After the decision is taken, but before the departure, migrants face some difficulties such as registering at the SLBFE, financing migration, preparing documents, making childcare arrangements, and preparing to work in a foreign country. High risks are involved in the preparatory activities of migration because of bogus recruitment agencies in the country and moneylenders who give loans to migrants at high interest rates (Shaw 2008a; Kottegoda 2006; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Eelens 1995). Sri Lankan migrant women are often involved in illegal recruitment procedures, borrow money from private moneylenders, and in some instances, falsify passports and other documents such as birth and educational certificates. In examining the living and working conditions of Sri Lankan domestic workers in Lebanon, Abu-Habib (1998, p. 54) has reported:

Sri Lankan women often become involved in an illegal process of paying bribes to employment agencies, borrowing money from loan sharks and falsifying passports and travel documents.

Some women change their religious affiliations because the employers in the Middle East prefer to have Muslim women for their domestic work (Chammartin 2004a; Gamburd 2000; Abu-Habib 1998). In addition, they have a risk working for an unknown family in a completely new environment. Moreover, the majority of the Sri Lankan domestic worker migrants are married and have at least one child. They are entrusted with many responsibilities

as a mother and a housewife. Therefore, they have to make arrangements for childcare and other household activities before they migrate.

5.3.1 Recruitment procedure

Sri Lankan migrant domestic workers obtain employment abroad either through licensed agencies or through informal personal contacts (Gamburd 2005, 2000; Gunatilleke 1998; Eelens 1995). Although licensed agencies of the SLBFE ‘play a key role in recruiting women in overseas employment’ (Shaw 2008a, p.161), about one third of the migrants in this study have used informal networks. Women who have migrated through personal networks include repeat migrants. However, only nine women who had personal contacts and financial difficulties reported that they received air tickets from their relatives or friends working abroad. The opinion expressed in focus groups was that migrant women prefer to use informal channels rather than formal registration procedures because of the high costs involved in preparing for migration. This is because that the fees charged by private recruitment agencies are considerably higher than the costs involved in migration arranged by friends or relatives. It is a high cost for these women because they have to spend about half of their husbands’ annual income in preparing for migration when they migrate through formal channels.

A study of Eelens (1995, p.269) in Colombo and Gampaha districts has also reported that only 68 per cent of the domestic workers interviewed got their jobs through the registered agencies of the SLBFE, which is quite similar to the findings of this study. Women have the inclination to use informal channels than their male counterparts (Eelens 1995). Two possible reasons for the prevalence of informal channels among females as stated by Eelens (1995, p.269) are as follows:

[First], the prospective female migrants attach great value to the mediation of a migrant whom they know and the expected trustworthiness of the potential employer as well as the possibility of receiving help and advice from an experienced migrant plays an important role in facilitating migration, [and the second,] the prospective employer is also likely to view the friend or relative of a good worker as a more desirable candidate than a complete stranger.

Shaw (2008a, p.162) also found that nearly one third of migrants arranged their migration through informal contacts. According to Shaw (2008a), repeat migrants are more likely to use informal channels than migrants who have no previous work experience abroad. Returned

migrants who have used informal networks are found to be more successful than the migrants using formal networks in Shaw's (2008a) study, and this supports the findings of Shah (2000) and Gunatilleke (1998). Gunatilleke (1998) argues that migrant women prefer to use informal channels, as the formal procedures are costly, often cumbersome, and time consuming. Moreover, Kageyama (2008) and Lasagabaster *et al.* (2005) report that the costs involved in migrating through licensed agencies direct migrants to use personal networks.

With the introduction of compulsory registration of migrant workers at the SLBFE in 1995, the Government of Sri Lanka has made it illegal for agencies to recruit foreign employment without registering at the SLBFE. This accounts for a sharp increase of licensed agencies from 169 in the mid 1980s to 626 in 2008 (SLBFE 2009, p.61). However, of the total female departures in 2008, only 75.5 per cent have departed through licensed agencies (SLBFE 2009, p.5) indicating a significant proportion of women still use personal contacts in securing a job overseas. Although compulsory registration is a requirement and the numbers of licensed agencies have increased, numerous illegal activities were found to be involved in the recruitment of female domestic workers (Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Eelens 1995; Eelens and Speckmann 1990). Consequently, the high incidence of illegal recruitments by bogus agencies has become a major concern in female migration.

Some views about such malpractices were expressed in the focus groups. They reported cases of the bogus agents who charge prospective migrants money promising to send them abroad. After collecting a considerable amount of money from some people, they disappear, and could not be traced and did not get their money back. Eelens and Speckmann (1990) have also expressed the same views. In addition to these malpractices, documents such as birth certificates and passports are also frequently falsified due to several reasons:

- to change the date of birth in order to meet age restrictions imposed by several Middle East countries;
- to change the name of a person who has previously been expelled from a particular country;
- to substitute Muslim names for Sinhala or Tamil women for the purpose of gaining a concession on the payment for the airline ticket to Middle East destinations; or

- to change the religion since many Middle East countries prefer to have Muslim migrants (Dias and Jayasundere 2004a, 2004b; Eelens 1995).

However, according to Dias and Jayasundere (2004a), abolition of control of such malpractices has become difficult although the SLBFE has taken actions when such incidences have been reported.

5.3.2 Financing foreign employment

Another problem faced by the domestic workers in securing a job overseas is financing migration (Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Gamburd 2000; Eelens 1995). This cost is about US \$500, which includes the agency fee, the cost of preparing travel documents, the insurance policy, and airfare. It is about half of the annual income of their families before the migration as mentioned earlier. Therefore, it is a high cost according to the perspective of domestic workers since many of them come from low-income families. The average monthly household income of domestic worker migrant families is lower than the national average monthly household income as explained in section 1.5 of Chapter 1. Grama Niladharies who participated in the FGD discussions reported that Muslim migrants do not confront such financial difficulties as many of the employers in the Middle East send air tickets to the employees through the agency as well as the agency fee.

The returned migrants in the survey who interviewed were asked whether they had any problems in financing their migration. About 70 per cent of them reported that they did have problems in finding money as shown in Table 5.1. Variation exists not only by the areas in which the domestic workers live but also by ethnic groups. According to this table, more than 80 per cent of the returned migrants in both the urban and estate areas had a problem of finding money; but it is lower in rural areas (60.5 per cent). Eighty per cent of Muslim migrant families of this study are from rural areas. FGD participants reported that employers in the destination countries who prefer to have a Muslim domestic worker send money to the agents requesting a Muslim domestic worker. Recruiting agents, therefore, charge lower fees from Muslim women than the fees charged from other women or sometimes do not charge money at all. Because of the lower fees charged from Muslim women, it is to be expected that many rural women do not have financial problems as reported by urban and estate women.

Table 5.1 Whether the migrant women had any problem in finding money to finance migration by sector and ethnicity

Sector and ethnicity	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Sector						
Urban	58	82.9	12	17.1	70	100.0
Rural	72	60.5	47	39.5	119	100.0
Estate	24	85.7	4	14.3	28	100.0
Ethnicity						
Sinhalese	83	71.6	33	28.4	116	100.0
Tamil	48	90.6	5	9.4	53	100.0
Muslim	23	47.9	25	52.1	48	100.0
Total	154	71.0	63	29.0	217	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

The percentage of Muslim women who reported having a problem of financing migration is low (47.9 per cent) compared to Sinhalese (71.6 per cent) and Tamil (90.6 per cent) women. The majority of Sri Lankan population living in estate areas are Tamils. Estate migrant families have an average monthly household income of SL Rs.14,250 (approximately US \$125), which is lower than the average monthly household income of both urban (approximately US \$162) and rural (approximately US \$140) migrant families (DC&S 2008e, p.10). Moreover, as found in this survey the average number of children that estate women migrants have is 2.6, which is similar to the TFR in estate areas of Sri Lanka (DC&S 2008, p.7). However, it is higher than the average number of children for women in both urban (2.3) and rural areas (2.3). This suggests that estate migrant families have to feed more children than families in both urban and rural areas. Because of the lower household income and the higher number of children in estate families, it can be assumed that estate migrant families face more difficulties in financing their migration.

In this survey, only 29 per cent of migrants were able to pay the recruitment fees on their own (Table 5.1) whereas in Eelens' survey (1995, p.269) in Sri Lanka, it was about a quarter of migrants. In other words, in this survey, 71 per cent (154 women) of the total returned migrants (217) who had problems in financing their migration had to mortgage land, pawn

jewellery, go to moneylenders, or seek other ways to find money (Table 5.2). Out of these returned migrants (154), only 9 women went abroad with the ticket sent by a relative or friend as reported earlier.

Table 5.2 Number and percentage distribution of women who sought money in securing work abroad by source

Source of money	Number	Percentage
Taken loans from moneylenders	107	69.5
Borrowed from relatives or friends	12	7.8
Pawned jewellery	11	7.1
Taken loan from the agency	9	5.8
Ticket sent by a relation or friend	9	5.8
Mortgaged the land	6	3.9
Total	154	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

Although migrant women can get loans from banks at a lower interest rate than those charged by moneylenders, this survey shows that most domestic worker migrants prefer to go to moneylenders (about 70 per cent). If these migrants apply for a loan from a bank, they need to keep property as security. Since these migrant women come from low-income families, they do not have such properties to place as security. In addition, they have to show their fixed monthly income to convince them that they can repay the loan and have to spend more time in preparing the documents and waiting many days to get the loan. Therefore, they find it is easier to get a loan from moneylenders. Moreover, there are an increasing numbers of moneylenders due to the increasing participation of Sri Lankans in overseas employment.

Table 5.2 shows about 15 per cent of the migrants borrowed money from relatives and pawned jewellery. While about 4 per cent mortgaged their lands, another 5.8 per cent borrowed money from agents. Kottegoda (2006) and Eelens (1995) also report that borrowing money from relatives and pawning jewellery are two prevalent methods of finding money among Sri Lankan domestic workers. However, because of the higher interest rates charged by the private moneylenders, women have to allocate considerable proportions of their earnings to repay such loans in the first few months of their work abroad.

As shown in Table 5.3, women who borrowed money (154 women) had to repay them with interest within a specified period. Some 71 per cent reported that they did not have a specified time to repay the debt, and about one fifth of these women had to repay the loan within 3 to 12 months. It indicates that the more time they take to pay the loan, the more interest they have to pay. Therefore, migrant women commencing their working life overseas with a substantial

Table 5.3 Number and percentage distribution of women who agreed to repay loan by the period specified

Repayment period	Number	Percentage
Repay monthly with interest	11	7.1
Repay within a month with interest	2	1.3
Repay within 3 months with interest	18	11.7
Repay within 4 months with interest	4	2.6
Repay within 6 months with interest	7	4.5
Repay within a year with interest	3	1.9
No fixed time period	109	70.8
Total	154	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

burden of accumulated debt because of borrowing money from these moneylenders at high interest rates. According to the FGDs, prospective migrants who have contacts with some other domestic workers overseas seek their support to finance their migration. However, this is not an option for the majority of the migrants and they need to go to the agents. Thus, Sri Lankan domestic workers face difficulties in securing a job overseas and financing their migration.

5.3.3 Training

One of the objectives of the SLBFE is to provide training to migrant domestic workers before their departure. Accordingly, training of women who migrate as domestic workers has become a major concern of the SLBFE, and therefore, a number of training programmes have been instigated. Preparing the migrant with adequate training and orientation for overseas employment is important in several ways. It assists them in making aware of the protection mechanism and kind of exploitation that exist at the destination, to adapt to the norms of destination countries and their working and living conditions, to understand and obey the rules

of the employer, and to understand the attitudes of the employers (Save the Children 2006; Dias and Jayasundere 2004b). As mentioned in Section 5.2, one of the major concerns of the amendments to the 1985 Foreign Employment Act was compulsory training. Consequently, the number of training centres has increased. By 2007, 26 training centres have been established throughout Sri Lanka run by the SLBFE, and 36,029 women were trained in 2007 (SLBFE 2008, p.68). According to the discussion with the SLBFE officials, initially, 7 days training was given to the Middle East migrants whereas for the non-Middle East migrants it was a 20 days training. In 1998, the duration was increased to 12 days for the Middle East migrants and to 21 days for the others. However, the length of the training for domestic workers varies depending on the country of destination, a Middle East country or a non-Middle East country. Normal duration of the training for women who migrate to the Middle East countries is 12 days, and women who are required some language skills get 18 days training. For repeat migrants, the SLBFE provides a one day refresher training course.

The training programmes have been designed to make the migrants aware of the following areas according to a discussion held with a training officer of the SLBFE:

- handling modern household appliances such as the use of vacuum cleaners and kitchen appliances;
- the use of modern bathrooms assuming that the majority of the domestic workers have little or no knowledge in using them;
- minimal language instructions both in English and Arabic;
- the religious and cultural laws;
- the customs of Arabic countries, including special clothing requirements and restrictions on women's freedom;
- the rights and duties of the migrant, the procedures to follow in the event of an emergency, first-aid techniques, family planning, and sexually transmitted diseases;
- finance management including banking procedures;
- procedures to follow at the airports at the departure and on arrival;
- forms to be filled at airports; and

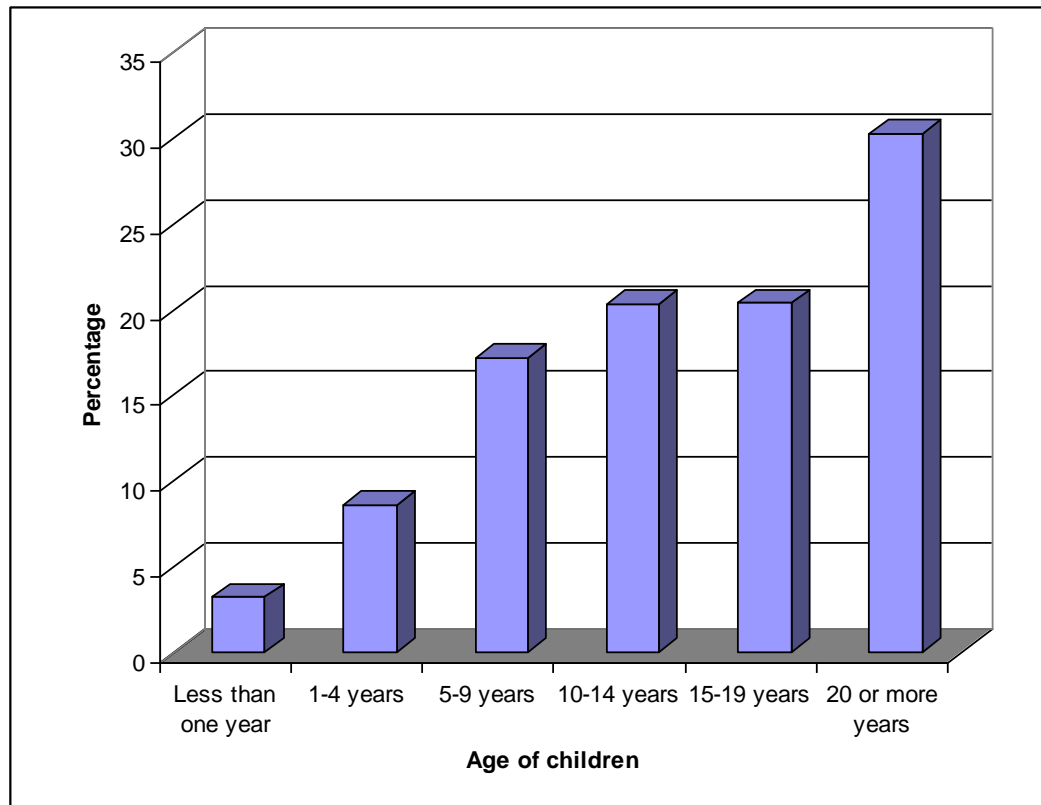
- how to get rid of feelings such as homesickness, loneliness, and emotional strains.

The government seeks for domestic workers to be both ‘law abiding and productive’ (Gamburd 2000, p.54). The SLBFE adheres to this by providing knowledge and training on these aspects of migration. However, in the study of Gamburd (2000), the views of the migrants on training differed from the official perspectives. Migrants felt that those who migrate for the first time could get instructions from the returned migrants from their village. However, this may not be the case for the migrants in other areas of the country. In this survey, 51.2 per cent of respondents reported that they had received training. This does not mean that all others did not receive training as this percentage includes repeat migrants. About 92 per cent of the migrants have worked more than 2 years indicating that most of these migrants are repeat migrants. When the returned migrants of the survey were asked whether they require any further training if they sought to work overseas again, 65 per cent said that they needed such training showing the usefulness of the training provided by the SLBFE.

These training programmes have helped immensely to unravel some of the problems encountered by migrants according to a woman who participated in a FGD. More importantly, as Dias and Jayasundere (2004a) reported, these programmes have contributed to the development of the status and image of Sri Lankan domestic workers. However, these migrants are considered capable since they have the ability to adapt to a completely different environment and satisfy their employers with hard work while running two households simultaneously.

5.3.4 Arrangements for childcare

Migrant workers in this study had to migrate leaving at least one child at home. The average number of children that these women had was 2.3, and more than three quarters of these women had two or more children. Age distribution of these children is shown in Figure 5.1, and it is the age of children at the time of the survey. According to this figure, about half of the migrant women had children of age 15 years or more. It is to be expected that many of these children were young at the time of mothers’ migration since more than half of the migrant workers in the study had returned to Sri Lanka within the decade before the time of interviewing. It can be assumed that many of these children were of school going age when

Figure 5.1 Age distribution of the children of migrant women

Source: 2008 female migration survey

the mothers were abroad. As mothers, they have the responsibility of caring for their children not only when they are at home, but also when they are abroad. These women left their children in the care of their husbands, parents, relatives, or the eldest child. The father is the carer for more than two thirds of the migrant families interviewed. The support received from the extended family members is also large in Sri Lanka. Childcare arrangements are discussed in detail in Section 7.3 of Chapter 7. Unlike Sri Lankan women who migrate as domestic workers, other countries like the Philippines seek the assistance of hired nannies to take care of children in their absence, which is highlighted in the following quote of Hochschild (2002, p.21):

Most mothers try to leave their children in the care of grandmothers, aunts and fathers, in roughly that order. An orphanage is the last resort. A number of nannies working in rich countries hire nannies to care for their own children back home either as solo caretakers or as aides to the female relatives left in charge back home.

However, Sri Lankan domestic workers are not in a position to hire a nanny to care their children in their absence because of low income.

When the returned migrants were asked whether they had any problems other than financial problems before their departure, little more than a quarter (57 returned migrants) stated that they had a problem with childcare arrangements. Others did not perceive childcare as a problem because of the willingness of other family members to take responsibility of childcare in the absence of the migrant women. However, 57 returned migrants perceived childcare arrangements as a problem because they did not obtain their consent from their family members to take care of their children. Therefore, they had to convince them about the benefits of migration, especially the economic benefits, to get their consent. Table 5.4 shows the number and percentage distribution of persons who agreed to provide childcare support.

Table 5.4 Number and percentage distribution of the persons who agreed to provide childcare support in the absence of mothers

Persons agreed to provide childcare support	Number	Percentage
Husband/eldest daughter	16	28.1
Relative	37	64.9
Husband/eldest daughter/relative	3	5.3
Sent to an institution	1	1.8
Total	57	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

Out of 57 women who perceived childcare as a problem, 64.9 per cent reported that a relative agreed to look after their children. For about one third of the families, migrant's husband agreed to take the responsibility of childcare since they received the support from the eldest child and relatives. Only one woman had to send her child/children to an institution.

5.4 Female domestic workers at the destination

In the second stage of migration, at the destination, migrant women face another set of challenges. Adjustment to a completely new environment, working for an unknown family, harassment by employers, and emotional strains are some of them (Chammartin 2004a; Al-Najjir 2004). According to Jolly and Reeves (2005, p.3), 'opportunities and rewards received by men and women are different in the international labour markets'. As they argue, migration

policies of the destination countries are more favourable for skilled workers, and therefore, domestic workers who are recognised as unskilled workers are more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse (Jolly and Reeves 2005). Moreover, the ‘opportunities and rewards’ (Jolly and Reeves 2005, p.3) received and the problems they faced are different depending on the country of origin of these migrants, ethnicity and religion they belong to, and the educational level of women (Rahman *et al.* 2005; Yeoh *et al.* 2005; Abu-Habib 1998). Hugo (2005c, p.86) points out that migrant domestic workers ‘are often exposed to greater health risks than would be the case if they remained at home’. In the words of Yeoh *et al.* (2005a):

Filipinas are invariably characterised as streetwise, outgoing, well-educated and westernised but more aware of their rights and difficult to manage while, as a foil, Indonesia are described as traditional, obedient and loyal but slower and simple-minded.

Unlike the Filipinas, Sri Lankan migrants are less educated, and are not sociable and outgoing (Al-Najjir 2004; Chammartin 2004a). In general, their socio-economic levels are low. As Rahman *et al.* (2005, p.243) show, positive stereotypes of Sri Lankan domestic workers are ‘responsible, helpful/pleasing, obedient, and shy’, and negative stereotypes are ‘dark-skinned, too slow, backwards, has poor hygiene, very poor command in English’. These stereotyped images have caused more problems for Sri Lankan women than Filipino women migrants. However, in spite of the country of work, Sri Lankan domestic worker migrants are more vulnerable to various forms of mistreatment, infringements of their rights, and exploitation and abuse (Yeoh *et al.* 2005a; Gamburd 2005; Chammartin 2004a; Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004; Abu-Habib 1998).

5.4.1 Migrant destinations

The Middle East is the major destination for female domestic workers in the study area and the females departed in 2008 for employment as shown in Table 5.5. Women interviewed by Gamburd (2000) in Sri Lanka also show that the migration to the Middle East is the only available economic alternative for them to sustain their families. As shown in Table 5.5, a slight difference of the percentage distributions of women by destination countries is found between survey and the females who departed in 2008. Percentage of women who migrated to the non-Middle East countries is 2.6 per cent in this survey and it was 3.6 per cent for females departed in 2008. However, some variations in the percentages are found between the

Table 5.5 Number and percentage distribution of migrants in the study and total female departures in 2008 by the country of destination

Destination	Migrants in the study		Percentage of total departures in 2008
	Number	Percentage	
Kuwait	165	41.3	32.8
Saudi Arabia	119	29.8	32.7
United Arab Emirates	40	10.0	12.3
Lebanon	32	8.0	4.3
Qatar	13	3.2	4.4
Jordan	8	2.0	5.8
Cyprus	7	1.8	2.1
Oman	7	1.8	2.0
Bahrain	6	1.5	2.5
Malaysia	1	0.3	0.3
Singapore	1	0.3	0.5
Maldives	1	0.3	0.2
Total	400	100.0	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey and SLBFE (2009, p.31)

countries in the Middle East. While the two countries, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, account for 71 per cent of migrants in the study, only 65.4 per cent of females departed in 2008 was absorbed by these countries. Another 18 per cent of women in the study was absorbed by United Arab Emirates and Lebanon, and Lebanon has emerged as an important destination in recent years (Rodrigo 1999) and Lebanon has been more attractive for migrant women in the study than the women departed in 2008. However, the destinations of domestic workers in Southeast Asia such as Singapore and Malaysia have not been attractive for women both in the study and for female departures in 2008.

5.4.2 Living and working conditions

Sri Lankan migrant women often enjoy better living conditions abroad than they enjoy at home (Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004), and they are required to live in their employer's home.

Most women are provided with a separate room with a bathroom (Al-Najjir 2004). FDG participants had a common view that Sri Lankan domestic workers overseas enjoy improved living conditions compared with those prevailing in their own houses in Sri Lanka. However, living in the employers' home has both advantages and disadvantages (Kottegoda 2006; Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004; Eelens 1995; Soysa 1992). On one hand, these women have security and receive food and accommodation free of charge (Kottegoda 2006; Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004; Eelens 1995; Soysa 1992). On the other hand, they are more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, and more likely to work in environments that limit their social contacts with either friends or family (Hugo 2005c; Jolly and Reeves 2005; Rahman *et al.* 2005; Yeoh *et al.* 2005; Chammartin 2004a; Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004; Eelens 1995).

Although the migrant domestic workers have better living arrangements at the destination countries compared to their living condition in Sri Lanka, their working conditions are generally poor as they are overburdened with work (Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004; Abu-Habib 1998). The nature of work of the migrants at the destination was explored in this survey, and the reported responses are given in Table 5.6. Seventeen members of the migrant

Table 5.6 Number and percentage distribution of migrant women by the nature of work overseas

Nature of work	Number	Percentage
Cooking	4	1.0
Childcare	5	1.3
Cleaning	3	0.8
Washing vehicles	14	3.7
Cooking and cleaning	64	16.7
Childcare and cleaning	7	1.8
Cooking, childcare and age care	12	3.1
Cooking, childcare and cleaning	223	58.3
Cooking, age care and cleaning	18	4.7
Cooking, childcare, age care, and cleaning	28	7.3
Cooking, childcare, age care, cleaning, and other work	5	1.3
Total	383	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

households reported that they did not know the work that the migrants perform abroad. It is interesting that out of 383 respondents only 6.8 per cent stated that the migrant women perform only one activity such as cooking, cleaning, washing vehicles, or childcare. Washing vehicles is also an activity performed by 3.7 of them. Some 18.5 per cent of them reported that migrant women perform two duties together; cooking and childcare or cooking and cleaning. Another significant proportion of them (66.1 per cent) perform three activities simultaneously. Among the women who perform three activities, the largest proportion (58.3 per cent) engaged in cooking, childcare, and cleaning. About 8 per cent engaged in four or more duties together. These findings highlight the fact that the majority of the domestic workers are entrusted with a heavy workload. Moreover, while 70 per cent of these women care for the children of high-income families for money, care taking of their own children has become the responsibility of the family members at home in Sri Lanka.

5.4.3 Exploitation and abuse

Migrant domestic workers are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse while they work overseas (Shaw 2008a; Silvey 2006; Asis 2005b; Hugo 2005c; Raghuram 2005; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004; Abu-Habib 1998). They are more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse because most women stay at the employers' home. It has become 'impossible to treat these private homes like a workplace' (Varia 2007, p.3). Laws of destination countries do not cover the standard labour protection such as minimum wage, regular payment of wages, a weekly day off, and paid leave (Varia 2007; Chammartin 2004b). Consequently, not only Sri Lankan women but also migrant women of other countries face exploitation and abuse. For example, many cases of 'torture, sexual assault, overwork, and non-payment of wages' have been reported by Indonesian women working as domestic workers in Saudi Arabia (Silvey 2006, p.23). The following quote of ILO (2007, p.4) highlights the vulnerability of migrants, especially of domestic workers:

Despite the positive experiences of many migrant workers, a significant number face undue hardships and abuse in the form of low wages, poor working conditions, virtual absence of social protection, denial of freedom of association and worker's rights, discrimination and xenophobia, as well as social exclusion. These developments erode the potential benefits of migration for all parties, and seriously undermine its developmental impact. The most vulnerable workers to abuse of human and labour rights are women migrant workers, especially domestic workers, migrant workers in irregular status, trafficked

persons and youth migrant workers. Low skills add to the vulnerability of migrant workers while skilled workers are in a better position to protect their rights.

Although a question on working hours was not asked in this survey, several studies reported that Sri Lankan domestic workers have long working hours (Al-Najjir 2004; Chammartin 2004b; Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004; Abu-Habib 1998; Eelens 1995). Eelens (1995, p.270) reported that little more than two thirds of female migrants interviewed worked more than 12 hours daily, and about one third worked more than 15 hours per day, which is more than the normal working hours of 8 hours per day. In the same survey, only 13 per cent had one day off per week and 71 per cent did not get any paid holidays during their contract period. There is no doubt that this is the situation common for many of the domestic workers abroad.

Getting used to a new environment in a foreign country in the first few months for Sri Lankan women was found to be difficult mainly due to the differences in language, culture, living conditions, dresses, climate, and household activities (Chammartin 2004a; Dias and Jayasundere 2004b; Eelens 1995; Cumaratunga 1990). Language was a major barrier for Sri Lankan domestic workers in communicating with their employers, as their level of English knowledge is low except for a smaller number of them. As Cumaratunga (1990) shows the inability to communicate and express their feelings in the first few months of their work increase migrants' stress. However, they manage to cope with these difficulties with the help of Sri Lankans when they meet at churches, market places, or other public places (Dias and Jayasundere 2004b; Cumaratunga 1990).

Migrant domestic workers face abuses while they work abroad. In this study, abuse is defined as physical assault and sexual and verbal harassments, extracting the idea of the definition of abuse by Gelles (1985). In this survey, only 28.6 per cent of migrants (112 women) reported that they had to face abuse as shown in Table 5.7. According to this table, verbal humiliation is the most common form of abuse reported by 98.2 per cent of the respondents. It includes use of bad words, insulting, yelling etc. This is also the common form of abuse reported by Al-Najjir (2004) in examining the experiences of migrant domestic workers in Bahrain. In this survey, the percentage of women who faced physical abuse, which includes kicking, injuring, assaulting, etc. is 51.8 per cent. A returned migrant of this study reported that her head was seriously injured because the employer hit her head with a wooden bar, and was in the hospital for few weeks. Another woman reported that she had to return to Sri Lanka before the

completion of the contract period because of the frequent hitting by the employer's wife. Compared to verbal and physical abuse, sexual abuse is insignificant (6.3 per cent) among Sri Lankan migrant domestic workers.

Table 5.7 Number and percentage distribution of migrant women by the nature of abuse they faced

Nature of abuse	Number	Percentage
Verbal abuse	50	44.6
Physical abuse	1	0.9
Sexual abuse	1	0.9
Verbal and physical abuse	54	48.2
Verbal and sexual abuse	2	1.8
Verbal, physical, and sexual abuse	4	3.6
Total	112	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

However, according to the views of the FGD participants, sexual abuse is underestimated, as these migrants do not divulge them in public. Gamburd (2000 p.101) points out that according to an estimate of one of the advocates she interviewed, 20 per cent of the migrants have suffered rape. As Gamburd (2000) argues those who suffer abuse report other problems such as low salaries, excessive working hours but not sexual abuse because of the social stigma attached to it. It is difficult for the government and other organisations to protect them from exploitation and abuse because the labour laws of destination countries are not favourable for these migrant women (Shaw 2008a; Hugo 2005c; Asis 2004b; Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004). In examining the working and living conditions of Sri Lankan domestic workers in Lebanon, Jureidini and Moukarbel (2004, p.584) explains that malpractices of employers' such as non-payment or late payment of salaries, breaches of contract, and the lack of payment for overtime exist as these issues cannot be dealt within the local courts.

5.5 Complaints from domestic workers

According to the SLBFE (2008, p.69), the percentage of complaints received from females (7,197) are much higher than the complaints received from males (1,248), and it is the highest among domestic workers (6,545), especially those females working in Saudi Arabia (3,377).

Table 5.8 shows the nature of complaints received from men and women in 2007. The complaint lack of communication is the highest among females (21.9 per cent) whereas breach of employment contract is the highest among males (25.8 per cent). Non-payment of agreed wages and physical and sexual abuse are also prevalent among females, 18.4 per cent and 17.2 per cent respectively. It is interesting to note that 12.3 per cent of females have not come back to Sri Lanka after the completion of the contract although the reason for that is not clear.

Table 5.8 Number and percentage distribution of the nature of complaints by sex, 2007

NOTE:
This table is included on page 129 of the print copy of
the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Source: SLBFE (2008, p.69)

The study of Jureidini and Moukarbel (2004, p.599) reports the most common complaints as:

hitting, slapping, pushing, pulling or even cutting their hair (a serious humiliation of Sri Lankan women), belittling, verbally insulting, calling names, constant criticising of their works.

According to the survey of Eelens (1995, p.272), the most common types of irregularities in the treatment of domestic workers are:

withholding or delaying payment of salaries, refusal to grant periods of rest, withholding of the worker's passport, refusal to provide a return ticket at the end of the contract period, physical violence, sexual abuse and docked wages.

Al-Najjir (2004), Chammartin (2004a) and Jureidini and Moukarbel (2004) also show the problems faced by domestic workers in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Lebanon. The problems faced by Sri Lankan women can be different depending on the country in which they work, attitudes of their employers, status of the migrant workers and the ability of the migrants to overcome the problems they face (Al-Najjir 2004; Chammartin 2004b). Although the Sri Lankan government has taken action from time to time to curb exploitation and abuse, it continues to remain a grave issue. However, the protection of migrant workers at every stage of migration has been a major concern of the government of Sri Lanka, and therefore, the government with the assistance of the SLBFE has taken action from time to time to protect them to make a migration a success (Shaw 2008a; Kottegoda 2006; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a).

5.6 Conclusion

The experiences and the problems faced by Sri Lankan migrant women have been discussed in this chapter and elaborated using the findings of other studies done in Sri Lanka. The recruitment procedure, financing of migration, the training received, and childcare arrangements were discussed since they are some of the main issues, which influence the success or failure of the migration journey of women. Many of the migrants had problems in financing their migration and had to depend mostly on moneylenders. A little more than half of the migrants reported that they received training while the other half includes repeat migrants with working experience. In addition to the problem in financing migration, about a quarter of the migrants had the problem of childcare arrangements. Although the living arrangements of these women at the destination are comparatively better than the living arrangements at home, their working conditions are generally poor. A little more than a quarter of the migrants had faced abuse, with verbal abuse being the highest recorded. Having explored the challenges that migrant women faced before their departure and at the destination, the next chapter discusses the reasons for migration and the characteristics of migrants that will be useful in getting an insight to the background of migrant families.

CHAPTER 6

THE DECISION TO MIGRATE AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANTS

In addition to responding to the global demand for their services, women make the decision to move abroad because of a host of “push” factors in countries of origin. These include family obligations, unemployment, low wages, poverty, limited social and economic opportunities and the desire to expand their horizons. Women generally face greater decision making and financial restrictions than do men, which can pose obstacles to freedom of movement. Yet income-earning opportunities abroad can loosen traditional constraints on female mobility. Economic and social upheaval can also provide the impetus to leave.

(UNFPA 2006, p.22)

6.1 Introduction

Changing global labour markets have increased opportunities for both men and women to migrate internationally in large numbers (Piper 2005). Women’s response to this demand is different from that of men because of the greater restrictions women face in decision making and finances, the differences between the factors that determine the migration of men and women, and the emigration policies that treat men and women separately (Ghosh 2009; Eversole 2006; Jolly and Reeves 2005; Piper 2005; Chandra 2002). Reasons for migration are numerous, diverse, and complex (Hugo 1994; Chant and Radcliffe 1992). Individual decisions, household decision making dynamics, the economic and political environment in the host country, and the political environment play a major role in the decision making process and act as driving forces of migration (Eversole 2006, p.29). In addition, socio-cultural norms also influence migration decision making processes and can constrain or enable women’s migration (Eversole 2006). Moreover, the divergent characteristics of migrants influence not only women’s decisions to migrate but also determining the family impacts of their migration (UNFPA 2006).

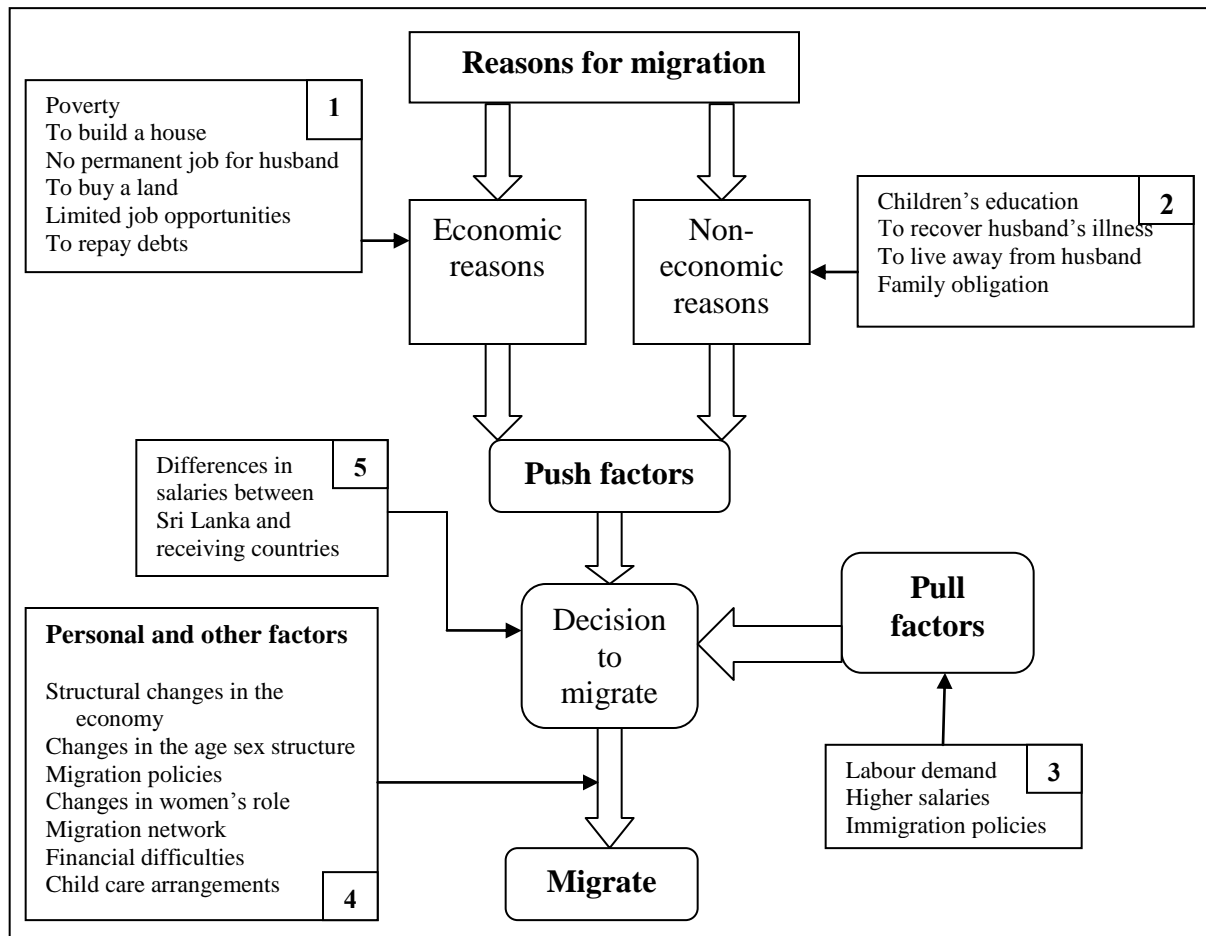
However, the migration of women reflects ‘their social roles, their capacity for making decisions and exerting autonomy, their access to societal resources, and the existing gender stratification in origin and destination countries’ (UN 2005, p.16). As Boyd and Grieco (2003, p.3) explain, ‘ongoing gender relations and hierarchies within a household context’ also affect such decisions. They also claim that the interests of migration are different for men and women and these interests determine ‘who migrates, for how long and to what countries’

(Boyd and Grieco 2003, p.2). This chapter begins with a discussion of the migration decision making process of women including a description of the reasons for their migration. It then moves to a discussion of the characteristics of migrants followed by a conclusion.

6.2 The decision making process

The decision making process of the migration of Sri Lankan women overseas is complex as it involves a host of push factors at origin (boxes 1 and 2 of Figure 6.1) and pull factors at destination (box 3 of Figure 6.1) along with personal and other factors (box 4 of Figure 6.1). These other factors include the structural changes in the economy, changes in the age sex structure of the population, migration policies, changes in the roles and status of women, and migration networks. The high demand for Sri Lankan domestic workers is also an important decisive factor for their migration. Moreover, economic benefits that they receive in working aboard play a key role in their decision making process (box 5 of Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 The decision making process of Sri Lankan migrant domestic workers



Why do these Sri Lankan women take the decision to migrate as domestic workers? The reason for migration is clearly the economic support of the family. Out of the 400 migrant household respondents, 94 per cent (374 respondents) reported that the main reason for their migration was economic (Table 6.1). These economic reasons include poverty, limited employment opportunities for them to work in Sri Lanka, the lack of permanent jobs for their husbands, repayment of debts, buying land, building a house, and family obligations. Individual, household, and state level economic environments are reflected in these reasons (Eversole 2006). Of these 374 respondents, equal proportions (about 36 per cent) reported the main reason as poverty and building a house.

Table 6.1 Number and percentage distribution of migrant women by the main reason for migration

Main reason for migration	Number	Percentage
Poverty	147	36.7
To build a house	145	36.3
Husband did not have a permanent job	30	7.5
To buy a land	22	5.5
Family obligation	20	5.0
To live away from husband	11	2.7
For children' education	9	2.3
To repay debts	8	2.0
Limited employment opportunities in Sri Lanka	4	1.0
To recover husbands illness	4	1.0
Total	400	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

Those who reported poverty as the reason for migration had a perception that their monthly income was not sufficient because of the rising cost of living in Sri Lanka. In addition, their housing conditions were generally poor as observed during the interviews. A lack of permanent jobs for husbands of migrants was a reason reported by about 8 per cent of the respondents. A little less than half of the migrants' spouses worked as labourers and they did not have a fixed income. Two per cent of these migrant families also reported that they wanted to migrate to overcome indebtedness.

Females migrate not only because of economic reasons but also due to non-economic reasons such as ‘fleeing surveillance by communities, getting out of a bad marriage, or fleeing from domestic violence’ although the numbers are not as high as for economic reasons (UNFPA-IOM (2006, p.25). In this study, only 6 per cent of the respondents reported non-economic reasons such as children’s education, to live away from husbands, and husbands’ illness as the main reason for their migration (Table 6.1). Although educational improvement is one of the reasons given for females to migrate (IOM 2007), only 2.3 per cent of these women indicated this as the main reason for their migration. Since children in Sri Lanka get free education, these families do not face the problem of providing education for their children. The opinion of the FGD participants is that as long as these migrant families have the ability to purchase textbooks and other requirements including uniforms and to pay transport costs if the schools are away from their homes, they do not consider this a problem. According to them, the majority of these families do not expect more education than they receive from schools except in the case of a few families who expected higher education for their children. There are a considerable number of school dropouts in these families as reported by the FGD participants although the respondents did not want to reveal it to the interviewers. It is interesting that 2.7 per cent of the respondents reported that they migrated, as they wanted to live away from their husbands at least for a short period. This was mainly due to the alcoholism of their husbands.

The need for income is often the primary motivator for women’s migration as mentioned earlier. Migrant women need money for daily consumption needs of the household, to buy land, build houses, repay debts, children’s education, etc. Women who were not previously employed in Sri Lanka knew that they could earn at least US \$100 per month, which is the minimum salary stipulated by the SLBFE, by working abroad. Women who were previously employed expected a higher salary by working abroad than what they earned in Sri Lanka. When women who worked in Sri Lanka before migration were asked about the reason why they stopped working, and most of them (95.4 per cent) reported that they wanted to go abroad because the salary they earned in Sri Lanka was not sufficient. These women compared the difference between the salary that can be earned by working in Sri Lanka and by working abroad. As Sumulong and Zhai (2008) argue, the income gap between developing and developed countries plays a significant role in attracting migrants to capital abundant and labour scarce countries. Therefore, income difference between the labour sending and labour

receiving countries has become one of the major determinants of international labour migration of Sri Lankan females. Transnational domestic workers earn between US \$100 and US \$150 per month while abroad, and this amount is about two to three times higher than what women can earn working in Sri Lanka (Gamburd 2005). Although there is a labour shortage for domestic service in middle and upper income households in Sri Lanka as Gunatilleke (1998) explains, these women prefer to work for foreign households rather than for Sri Lankan households at home.

In addition to the main reason for migration, the respondents were also asked about other reasons. Multiple responses were given to this question (Table 6.2). Even though poverty and building a house was the main reason for migration in a significant proportion of families, providing education for children, family obligation, and the failure of their husbands to find a permanent job were also important in their decision to migrate. A desire to have social relations outside home and to get their children married were reported by a small number of families as the reasons for migration.

Table 6.2 Number and percentage distribution of migrant women by the reason for migration - multiple responses

Reason for migration	Number	Percentage
For children' education	224	56.0
Family obligation	202	50.5
Husband did not have a permanent job	188	47.0
Poverty	177	44.3
Limited employment opportunities in Sri Lanka	109	27.3
To build a house	137	34.3
To repay debts	23	5.8
To buy a land	22	5.5
Desire to have social relations	19	4.8
To live away from husband	11	2.8
To recover husbands illness	4	1.0
To marry children	4	1.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

Neoclassical economic theory of migration considers the movement between countries as ‘an individual decision for income maximisation’, while the new economics of migration views it as a ‘household decision taken to minimise risks to family income’ (Massey *et al.* 1993, p.432). As Eversole (2006) argues, the decision to migrate is a collective decision of the household rather than an individual decision. According to the household theory of labour migration, the decision to migrate is perceived as an economic strategy adopted by the household to increase income inflows (Semyonov and Gorodzeisky 2005). These household strategies can be different from one country to another, one family to another, or over time (Jolly and Reeves 2005; Piper 2005; Semyonov and Gorodzeisky 2005). In the case of Sri Lankan women, it is a household strategy adopted by them to improve the condition of the family.

International migration policies in Sri Lanka are still favourable for women’s migration although an attempt has been made by the Sri Lankan government to restrict their migration. Ghosh (2009, p.9) points out that ‘migration laws have been more liberal and the society is more relaxed with regard to independent migration of women’ in the countries of the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia. As explained in Chapter 2, increasing numbers of Sri Lankan women have entered into the international labour market in the past few decades. The inability to employ them in economically productive activities at home has generated higher rates of unemployment among them. Moreover, there is a structural change in the economy, a movement from the agricultural sector to the industrial and service sectors. This has resulted in the displacement of female labour from the agricultural sector and movement towards finding more non-agricultural jobs. The attitudes of women and the role of women in the family have also changed during this period. Furthermore, as revealed by the FGD participants and according to the discussion with migrants, there are networks of friends and relatives working in destination countries and already returned to Sri Lanka. They serve as sources of information for other potential migrants. According to the FGD participants, these networks have helped prospective migrants to find employment with a better working environment and to get other relevant information. Women ultimately take the decision to migrate by considering all these factors.

The increase in Sri Lankan female migrant labour as domestic workers is attributed to a number of social, economic and policy factors (Kageyama 2008; Shaw 2008a; Kottegoda 2006; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a). The study of Gamburd (2000, p.45) reports that:

[women] need to migrate as they want to support their family's daily consumption needs, educate their children, and provide dowries for themselves (in the case of unmarried women) and their daughters (in the case of married women).

Almost all women interviewed in the studies of Shaw (2008a), Save the Children 2006 and Gamburd (2000) had the desire to improve the economic status of their families with special concentration on building a house, educating their children and overcoming indebtedness. The study of Yapa (1995) also reports similar findings. However, Athukorala (1990) argues that the migration of Sri Lankan women involves a heavy opportunity cost due to the separation from their families although their migration involves financial considerations.

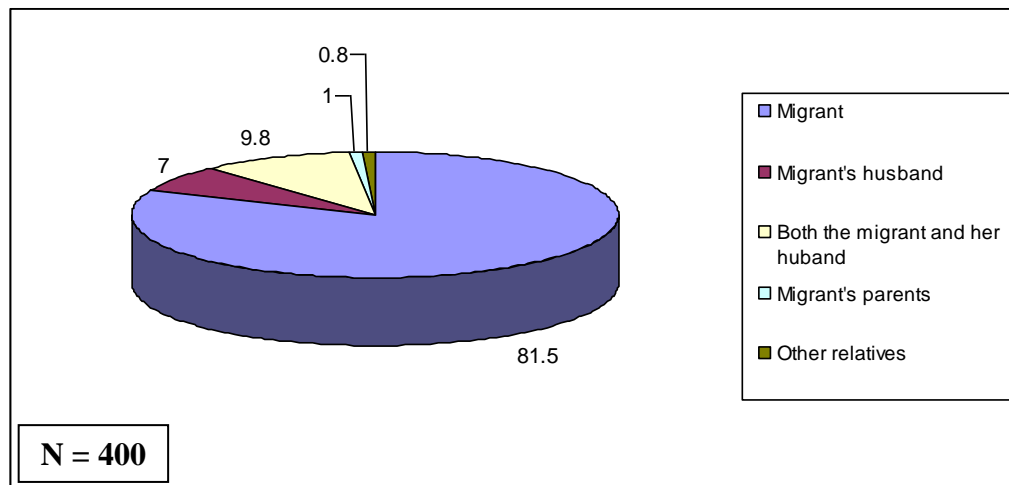
It is interesting to note that women in Gamburd's (2000) study take the decision to migrate after weighing economic requirements of their migration against the social costs such as separation from the family and childcare problems. Because of poverty and limited employment opportunities for women in Sri Lanka, women eagerly respond to the labour demand abroad (Dias and Jayasundere 2004a). The findings of the Gamburd's study (2000) emphasise that high unemployment and underemployment limit job opportunities in Sri Lanka, and Jayaweera *et al.* (2002) show that the existing opportunities are mostly poorly paid and temporary. As Shaw (2008a) explains, the higher unemployment that prevailed among Sri Lankan migrant women prior to their departure acted as a push factor for women in low-income families to migrate. Similarly, Wickramasekera (2002) points out that the higher level of unemployment and poverty in source countries act as a push factor in the decision to emigrate. Review of existing literature especially in relation to Sri Lanka reveals that the most obvious and popular reasons for women's migration are economic although there are some non-economic factors exist.

Who makes the decisions on migration? Jolly and Reeves (2005) show, women have little influence on migration decisions in the household. According to Kottegoda (2006), in many of the families, it is not the decision of the migrant women alone. The discussions with spouse, extended family members, and returned migrants also found that they influence their

decisions. INSTRAW (2000) points out that the prospective migrant takes the decision after a discussion with her husband. The study of Yapa (1995) points out, the decision to migrate is individual and personal. The finding of Kottegoda (2006), which indicates that migrants take the decision to migrate with the discussion of their extended family members, is consistent with the findings of Yapa (1995).

The person mainly responsible for making the decision to work overseas in this study is the migrant. Out of the 400 respondents, 82 per cent reported that they alone took the decision to work overseas (Figure 6.2). Only 7 per cent of these migrant families revealed that the decision to migrate was taken by the migrant's husband, and about 10 per cent resulted from a

Figure 6.2 Persons mainly responsible for making the decision to work overseas



Source: 2008 female migration survey

joint decision of both the migrant and her husband. The involvement of persons other than the migrant or her husband in taking the decision is insignificant. These findings indicate that women have some power in deciding to migrate to overcome their financial difficulties. Reviewing the studies on female migration in Southeast Asia, Asis *et al.* (2004) also reports that the decision to migrate is an individual decision rather than a household decision. Although women have more power in making the decision to migrate, their migration is recognised as a household strategy since the reasons for their migration, in general, is largely to improve the well-being of their families.

6.3 Characteristics of migrant domestic workers

The studies of female labour migration in Sri Lanka and other countries (Shaw 2008a; Hugo 2005c; Parrenas 2001a; Ratnayaka 1999; Eelens 1995) have shown similarities and dissimilarities between migrants in terms of characteristics such as age, marital status, education, area of residence, and ethnicity. They are found to be important in studying the migration decision process as well as in investigating the impacts of migration. Characteristics of migrants in this study are discussed in terms of the geographical areas in which they live and their age, marital status, ethnic group, and education.

6.3.1 Area of residence

Of the respondent households, 59 per cent are located in rural areas, 31.3 percent in urban centres, and 9.8 per cent in estate areas (Table 6.3). The pattern of the distribution of the sample respondent households is similar to that of the national population since the majority of the population live in rural areas followed by urban and estate areas. The majority of the population in Colombo district live in urban areas while the majority of Kurunegala district live in rural areas. The pattern of the distribution of urban respondent households in Kurunegala district is consistent with the total population of the two districts since 87.5 per cent of the households in Kurunegala district were drawn from rural areas. Half of the

Table 6.3 Percentage distribution of respondent households in the study and the population distribution of Colombo and Kurunegala districts and Sri Lanka by sector

Respondent household, study district, and national population		Percentage			
		Urban	Rural	Estate	Total
Respondent households	Colombo	50.0	30.5	19.5	100.0
	Kurunegala	12.5	87.5	0.0	100.0
	Total	31.3 N=125	59.0 N=236	9.8 N=39	100.0 N=400
District	Colombo	54.6	45.1	0.3	100.0
	Kurunegala	2.4	97.2	0.5	100.0
Sri Lanka		14.6	80.0	5.4	100.0

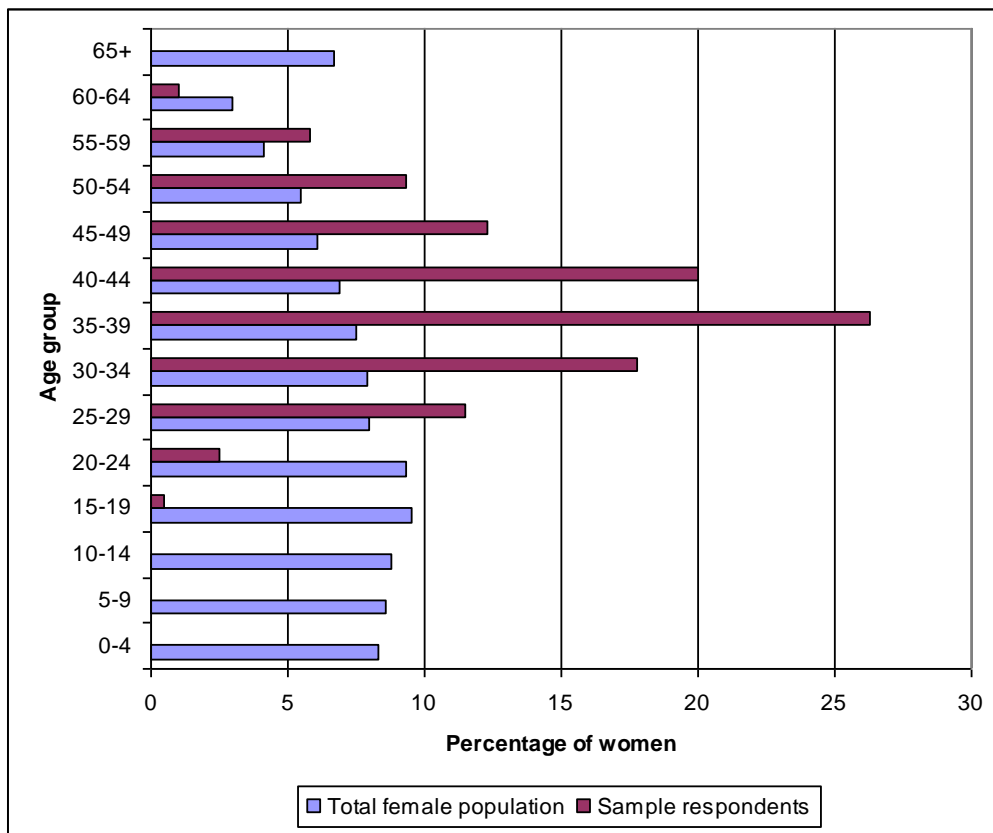
Source: 2008 female migration survey; DC&S (2001) www.government.gov.lk

respondent households in Colombo district were drawn from urban areas. Although the percentage of estate population is higher in the district of Kurunegala, no households were selected from that district since the area selected from the district does not include an estate area.

6.3.2 Age

The age distributions of 400 domestic workers in the study and the total female population of Sri Lanka are shown in Figure 6.3. Of the migrant population in the age group 15-64 years, 93.3 per cent are in the reproductive age group 15-49 years. Migrant women are highly concentrated in the age group 25-44 years (about 88 per cent) compared to about 36 per cent for the total female population. While 82.1 per cent of the migrants are in the age group of 20-44 years in this study, a similar percentage of 82.8 per cent was in the age group of 20-39 years in the study of Save the Children (2006, p.9). In addition, Gamburd (2000, p.96) also

Figure 6.3 Age distributions of the migrants in the sample and the total female population in Sri Lanka

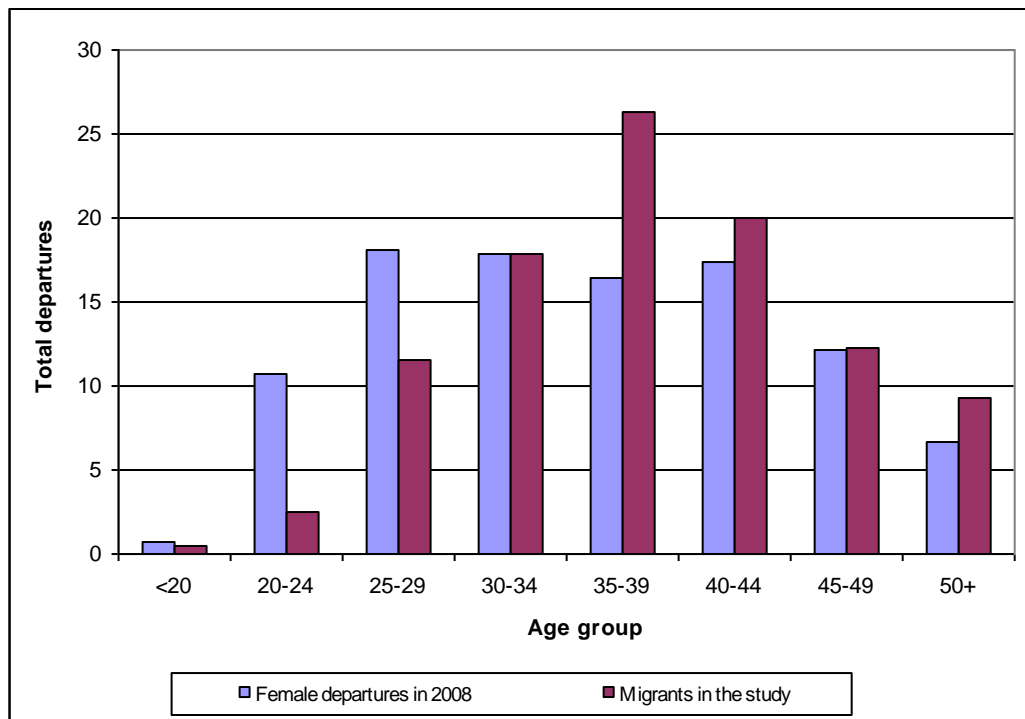


Source: 2008 female migration survey; DC&S (2001) www.government.gov.lk

reports that most departing Sri Lankan domestic workers were in the age group of 20-44 years.

Figure 6.4 compares the age distribution of the migrants in the study and that of the total outflow of female departures for foreign employment from Sri Lanka in 2008. The migrants in the study are slightly older than the females departed in 2008. This is to be expected since more than half of the migrant workers in the study are those migrants who have returned to Sri Lanka within the decade before the time of interviewing.

Figure 6.4 Age distribution of the total female departures for foreign employment in 2008 and the migrants in the study



Source: 2008 female migration survey; SLBFE (2009, p.41)

Figure 6.5 shows the age distribution of male and female departures for foreign employment in 2008, and indicates that females leaving Sri Lanka are somewhat older than their male counterparts. More females aged 35 years of age and over migrated than males in the same age group. This suggests that many women leave Sri Lanka for employment when their children have grown up a little. The median age of female migrants departing in 2007 was 34.7 years and that for the sample was 38 years. Therefore, the separation of these females in the

productive and reproductive age group from their families for extended periods, with the intention of earning money, can have both positive and negative effects on their families.

Figure 6.5 Age distribution of the departures for foreign employment by sex, 2008

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 142 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

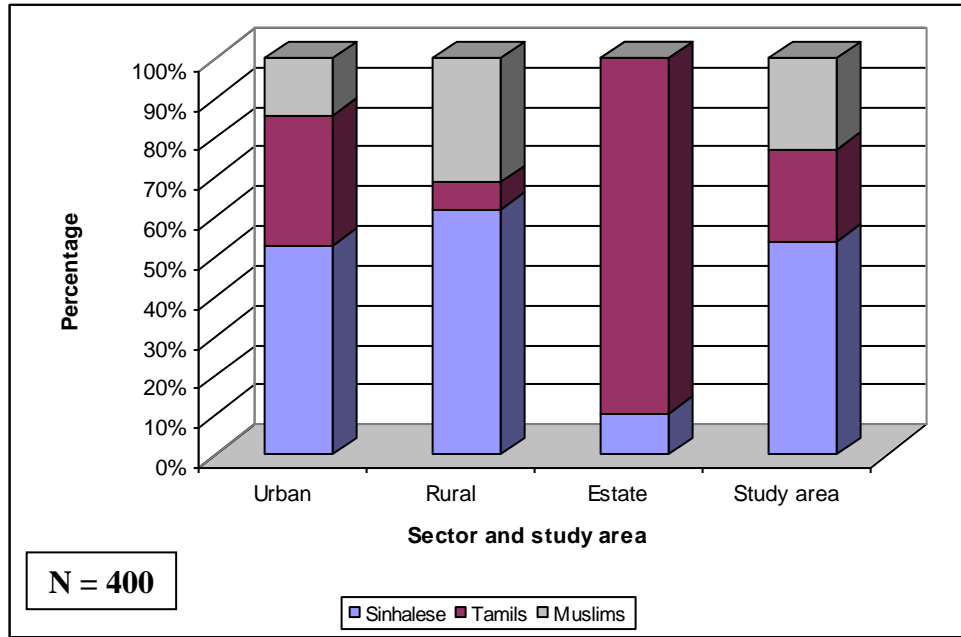
Source: SLBFE (2009, p.3)

6.3.3 Ethnic group

Of all migrants in the survey, some 54 per cent are Sinhalese and the remainder is distributed evenly between Tamils and Sri Lankan Moors (Figure 6.6). Although the total Muslim population in 2001 was only 8.2 per cent of the national population (DC&S 2001), Muslim migrant women represent 23 per cent of migrant domestic workers in the study. The Middle East is the major destination for Sri Lankan migrant domestic workers (SLBFE 2009), and therefore, most employers at the destination countries are Muslims. They prefer to have Muslim domestic workers (Gamburd 2000; Eelens 1995). A significant variation in the distribution of migrants by different ethnic groups is found between urban, rural, and estate sectors. Sinhalese form the majority of migrants in both urban and rural areas, while Tamils are the majority in estate areas. These are the areas where most of the tea plantations are located, and in estate areas, tea plucking is mainly performed by Tamil women. There are no Muslim migrants in estate areas since almost all the people living in estate areas are Tamils

with a minority of Sinhalese. The majority of the Muslims live in rural areas, although there is a higher demand for Muslim women in Western Asia, the Sinhalese still provide the largest share of domestic workers to the Middle East and other countries.

Figure 6.6 Distribution of migrant women by ethnicity



Source: 2008 female migration survey

6.3.4 Marital status

Out of 400 migrants, three quarters (302) were married while 12.8 per cent were widowed (51) and another 9 per cent were separated (36) with the remainder (2.8 per cent) being divorced (11) at the time of the survey. This indicates that about one quarter of these migrants' marriages were disrupted. When compared to the percentage of marriage break-ups of the total women in Sri Lanka according to the 2001 population census (8.5 per cent), the percentage of marriage break-ups are higher among the migrant women in the sample. The marriage disruption due to divorce and separation among migrant population is 13.8 per cent, and it is 1.1 per cent of the total female population. Marital status of women in the study and total female population in Sri Lanka in 2006 is shown in Table 6.4 and the marital status of women in the study by different sectors is shown in Figure 6.7.

The percentage of widowed women in the study increases with their age increases, and it is similar to the pattern of the widowhood of the total female population. However, the

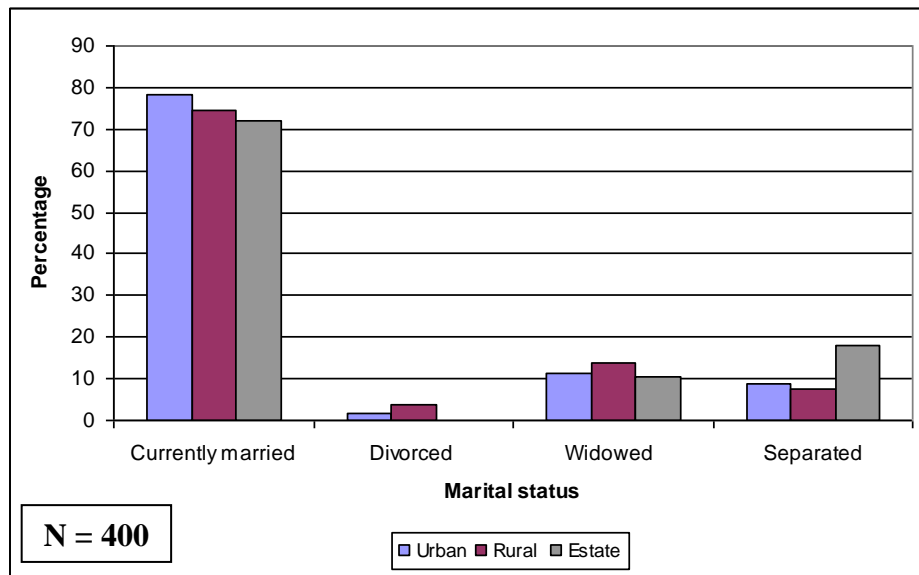
Table 6.4 Percentage distribution of the total females in Sri Lanka in 2006 and the migrants in the study by marital status and age

Marital status	Age in groups					
	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
Total female population 2006						
Never married	87.8	42.9	10.3	6.4	5.9	4.0
Married	10.3	54.1	84.6	84.3	77.4	60.1
Widowed	0.1	0.5	1.8	5.5	13.0	33.0
Divorced/separated	0.2	0.7	1.4	1.9	1.7	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Migrants in the study 2008						
Married	100.0	83.9	82.4	69.0	54.5	25.0
Widowed	0.0	3.6	6.2	18.6	33.3	75.0
Divorced/separated	0.0	12.5	11.4	12.4	12.1	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey; DC&S (2007, p.13)

Note: Total of the percentage of total females is not add up to 100 due to unspecified cases

Figure 6.7 Marital status of the migrants at the time of the survey by sector



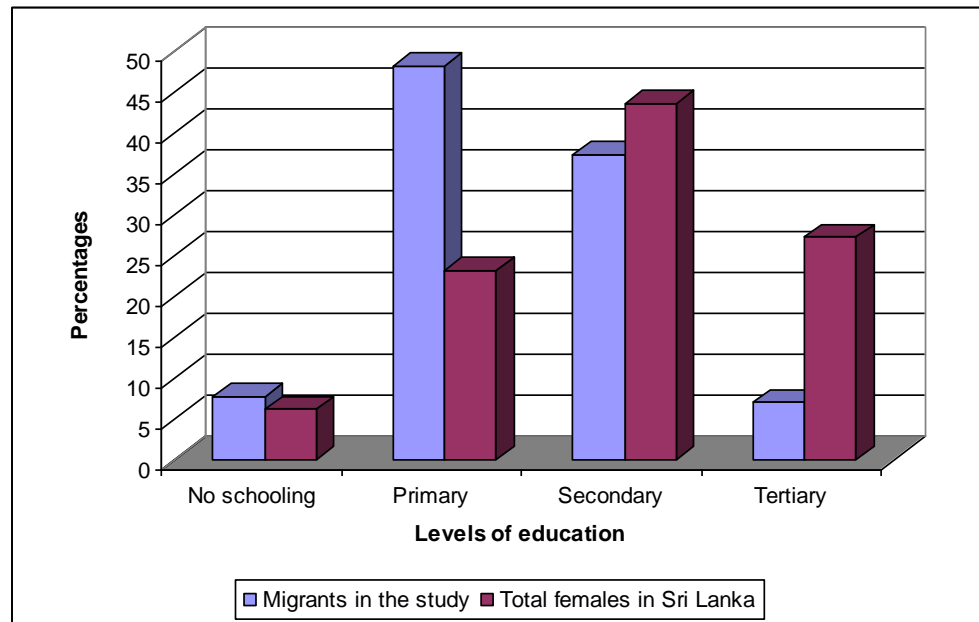
Source: 2008 female migration survey

percentages of widowed, divorced, and separated are noticeably higher among migrant women. These findings suggest that there is a higher prevalence of marriage disruptions among migrant women, which is an effect of their migration. Migrant women in the Philippines and Indonesia have the same experience. Asis (2004b) indicates that the economic independence of some Filipino migrant women has resulted in marriage disruptions. Hugo (1995) argues that marital disruption is both a cause and effect of the migration of women overseas, and women whose marriages are disrupted have more inclination to be an OCW. As shown in Figure 6.7, divorced cases are higher in rural areas while no cases were reported in estate areas. Widowed cases are again higher in rural areas whereas in both urban and estate areas it is almost equal. The number of reported cases of marital separation among estate women is much higher than the other two sectors though the reason for this difference is difficult to explain.

6.3.5 Education

Figure 6.8 indicates that the migrant domestic workers have lower levels of education compared to all Sri Lankan women. This fact is consistent with the finding of the studies of the Save the Children (2006) and Ratnayake (1999). Of the women in this study, a little less

Figure 6.8 Educational attainment of migrants in the study and the total female population



Source: 2008 female migration survey; DC&S (2007, p.21)

than 50 per cent had primary education (passed grades 1-5), which is double the percentage of total women with this level of education in 2006. While 37.3 per cent had secondary education (passed grades 6-11), another 7 per cent had tertiary education (passed GCE O/L or GCE A/L). The percentage of women in Sri Lanka who had attained education at the secondary level and above is higher than the level of migrant women. A significant difference in the achievement of tertiary education can be seen between migrant women and total females in Sri Lanka. About 8 per cent of the migrant women had no schooling although it is a requirement for them to have had some education to work overseas. The percentage of women with no schooling out of the total female population was 6.2 per cent, which is slightly lower than for migrant women.

In contrast, the majority of female migrants of the Rodrigo's survey in 1995 reported an educational attainment of secondary school level and above, as many of them have passed the GCE O/L examination. The survey of the Save the Children (2006, p.9) also reports that around 7.6 per cent had no education, almost a quarter (22.2 per cent) had a primary education, and over a third (42.4 per cent) had secondary education without proceeding to GCE O/L. The differences in these findings may probably be due to the differences in the definitions of educational attainment categories used by different studies. Although the findings of the educational attainment of the migrants are not exactly the same, it can be concluded that the majority of women migrate to work overseas have secondary education or below. This fact is further reflected in the findings of Gamburd (2005) that women with more education are not migrating to work in the low status job of domestic workers. However, education has a strong effect on female labour migration since they do not find jobs in Sri Lanka with a salary that they can earn abroad (Dias and Jayasundere 2004a). This fact was further confirmed by the opinion expressed in focus groups. While Indonesian migrant domestic workers have low levels of education (Hugo 2005c), the level of education of Filipino domestic workers is higher than both Indonesian and Sri Lankan women migrants (Parrenas 2001a; Zlotnik 1995). Because of their lower levels of education, the salary that they get as domestic workers is lower than that of the Filipino migrant women in destination countries (Chammartin 2005; Rahman *et al.* 2005; Al-Najjir 2004).

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has produced background knowledge about the decision making process and characteristics of migrants to better understand the social and economic impacts of migration on families and children. The decision making process of migration is complex as it involves a variety of factors at origin and destination as well as the factors associated with individual, household, and country level economic and social environments. Thus, women make the decision considering all or some of these factors. The reason for migration is mainly economic while some other non-economic factors also influence in the decision making process. Although a larger proportion of Sri Lankan migrant women make the decision to migrate, it is a household strategy of migrants adopted to improve the economic condition of the household.

In examining the characteristics of migrants and comparing the survey findings with other studies done in Sri Lanka, similarities and dissimilarities were observed. Migrants in this study represent the age group, which is economically and sexually active, and the sample population is slightly older than the outflow of females in 2008. Little less than a quarter of these migrant women reported a marital disruption, and variations in marital disruption exists between urban, rural, and estate sectors. While the majority of Sinhalese migrants are found in urban and rural areas, the majority of Muslims and Tamils are found in rural areas and estate areas respectively. The majority of women had primary education while 7.8 per cent had no education at all. The next chapter discusses the consequences of mothers' migration on the children left behind and how these mothers negotiate the care arrangements for their children from afar.

CHAPTER 7

TRANSNATIONAL MOTHERING

Every year, millions of women working millions of jobs overseas send hundreds of millions of dollars in remittance funds back to their homes and communities. These funds go to fill hungry bellies, clothe and education of children, provide health care, and generally improve living standards of loved ones left behind..... Leaving one's family in order to sustain takes a huge psychological and emotional toll. These women provide love and affection to their employer's children in exchange for earnings that can improve the quality of life of their own children-whom they sometimes never see for many years.

(UNFPA 2006, pp.1, 25)

7.1 Introduction

Increasing numbers of Sri Lankan women are mothering their children from a distance due to the global increase in the demand for domestic labour and care workers, which is a major dimension of the feminisation of migration. As Ruddick (1989, p.5) explains, 'mothering is a practice that involves the protection and nurturing of children, and training them for their adulthood'. Mothering from a distance has led to the emergence of transnational families with mothers being absent for a significant part of the growing up of their children (ILO 2007; Agrawal 2006; Hugo 2005a; Parrenas 2005a, 2001a; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997). In Sri Lanka, transnational families with absent mothers have grown in numbers due to the increasing participation of women in overseas employment as domestic workers in the last three decades (Ukwatta and Hugo 2009; Gamburd 2000). With the formation of transnational families with absent mothers, motherhood has acquired a new meaning, and it is called "transnational motherhood" (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997, p.548). Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997, p.548) have defined it as 'the organisational reconstitution and rearrangement of motherhood to accommodate the temporal and spatial separations forced by migration'. With the emergence of transnational families with mothers away for work, the children left behind have attracted the growing attention of scholars in recent years (Yeoh and Lam 2007).

Women migrate to work overseas to improve both economic and social livelihoods of the migrants and their families and children (Hugo and Ukwatta 2008; Shaw 2008a; Sumulong and Zhai 2008; Yeoh and Lam 2007; Gamburd 2005), and to take advantage of the greater

labour market opportunities in other countries within and outside Asia (Parrenas 2001a). It is the responsibility of migrant mothers to ensure the economic, social, and emotional security of their children (Parrenas 2005a), and therefore, they make arrangements to accommodate the spatial and temporal separation forced by their migration (Yeoh and Lam 2007; Parrenas 2001a; Battistella and Conaco 1996). Despite the economic bonus that these women gain through their migration (Save the Children 2006), mothering from a distance, undoubtedly, has social and emotional ramifications for both mothers who leave and their children left behind (Yeoh and Lam 2007; Parrenas 2001a). This is because these women are compelled to leave their children in the care of their grandmothers, other female kin or the fathers (Yeoh and Lam 2007; Parrenas 2001a). However, these women take the decision to migrate because of the monetary benefits that they gain through their migration (Hochschild 2000).

In the Asian region, there are several studies that have examined the situation of children left behind by migrant women (for example, Fresnoza-Flot 2009; Toyota *et al.* 2007; Yeoh and Lam 2007; Save the Children 2006; Yeoh *et al.* 2005b; Willis and Yeoh 2000; Battistella and Conaco 1996; Zlotnik 1995). In these studies, they have examined how the lives of the children left behind have been reshaped in a complex manner by the departure of the key household member, the mother who has been referred to as the “light of the home” Asis *et al.* (2004, p.199). However, many studies on transnational mothering have focused mainly on Filipino, Caribbean, and Latino migrant mothers.

In the Philippines, several aspects of transnational mothering have been investigated. For example, Fresnoza-Flot (2009) examines mothering strategies used by Filipino domestic worker migrants in France to negotiate their absence from home highlighting the consequences of their migration for family dynamics and intergenerational relations. Yeoh and Lam (2007) have explored the consequences of mothers’ migration on children left behind by reviewing the existing studies of some Asian countries including the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Hochschild (2002) shows how Filipino domestic workers are involved in a “global care chain” by caring for the children of other mothers in the destination countries while leaving their children at home. Parrenas (2001a) explores gender and intergenerational relations through the lens of emotions by interviewing Filipino domestic workers in Rome and Los Angeles. All these studies show that migrant women, their household members, and children experience migration and separation differently depending on their position in the family unit

and socio-economic levels of the family. However, compared to the Philippines, the number of studies conducted in relation to the impact of mothers' migration on children is very small in Sri Lanka.

It is important to know 'who is a child?' and also to get an idea about the number left behind by migrant women in the world, in Sri Lanka and in the study area before explaining the consequences of distant mothering and transnational practices in negotiating care work. Therefore, this chapter begins with a brief introduction to the children left behind by migrant mothers. By analysing the respondents' perspectives and supplementing the views of FGD participants, it then examines how Sri Lankan mothers make arrangements for childcare at home in their absence when leaving to work overseas. The consequences of distant mothering and how mothering strategies are used to negotiate their absence from home are examined next. Caring practices are reviewed in the Asian context to strengthen the findings of the survey. It also draws upon the notion of "light of the home abroad" to better understand mothering issues in the context of Sri Lanka.

7.2 The children left behind by migrant mothers

A child is defined as 'every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier' by the Convention on the Rights of the Child - CRC (World Health Organisation - WHO 2007, p.1). However, Yeoh and Lam (2007) explain that it is difficult to get accurate estimates of the total number of children left behind by migrant parents due to the differences in age limits used to define the child by different countries and researchers. By examining the estimates of the children left behind in countries such as Bangladesh, China, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka, Yeoh and Lam (2007) suggest that millions of children in the world live without seeing their mothers or fathers or both parents for many years. This fact is further confirmed by the findings of Blumenstein (2008). The average age at which Sri Lankan women entered wedlock was 23.8 years in 2001 (DC&S 2007, p.15). The median age of migrants in this study is 38.3 years suggesting that the children of migrant women in Sri Lanka were young at the time of their migration, which is the period that children most require their mothers' love and attention.

Table 7.1 shows that the percentage of women with more than two children is significantly higher among returned migrants (45.6 per cent) than women who were abroad at the time of

the survey (29 per cent). While the average number of children that returned migrants had was 2.5, women who were overseas at the time of the survey had 2.1 children.

Table 7.1 Number and percentage distribution of migrant women by two sample groups and number of children

Two sample groups	Number of children					
	One child	Two children	Three children	Four children	Five or more children	Total
Returned migrants						
Number	46	72	64	26	9	217
Percentage	21.2	33.2	29.5	12.0	4.1	100.0
Migrants away at the time of the survey						
Number	50	80	12	9	2	183
Percentage	27.3	43.7	23.0	4.9	1.1	100.0
Total migrants						
Number	96	152	106	35	11	400
Percentage	24.0	38.0	26.5	8.8	2.8	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

The distribution of migrant women by the number of children is shown by sector in Table 7.2 and Figure 7.1. Some 62 per cent of these women have one or two children, a fourth have three children, and 10 per cent only four or more children. There is little variation in the percentage of women with less than three children between different sectors. However, the percentage of women with one child is higher in the rural sector. When women with three or more children are considered, women with three children are higher in urban areas and lower in estate areas. However, the percentage of women with more than three children is higher in estate areas and lower in urban areas indicating the higher level of fertility of migrant women in estate migrant families.

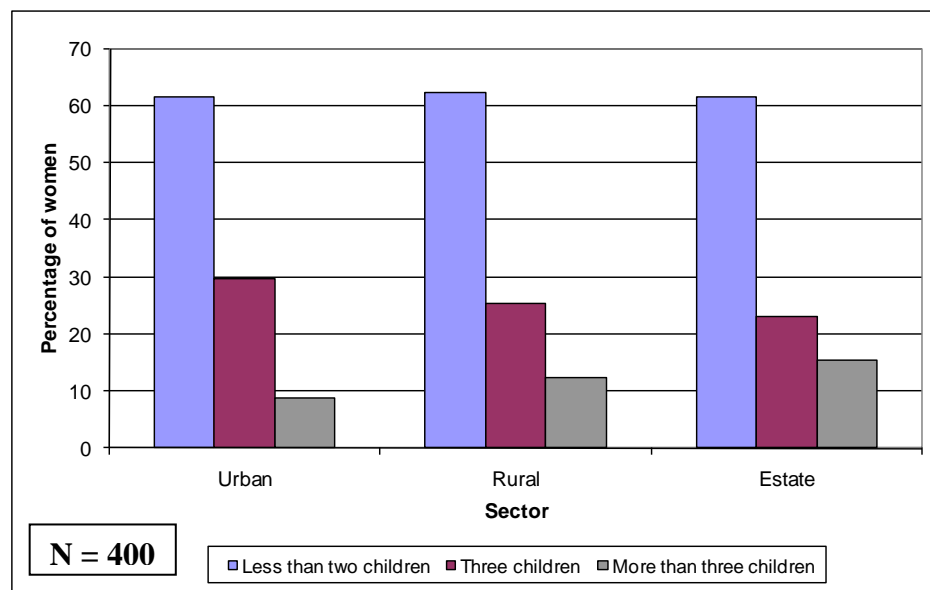
The average number of children that a migrant woman had was 2.3, which is slightly below the current TFR of 2.4 in Sri Lanka (DC&S 2008e, p.8). While the average number of children that both urban and rural migrant woman had was 2.3, it was higher (2.6) in estate

Table 7.2 Number and percentage distribution of women by number children and sector

Sector	Number of children					Total
	One child	Two children	Three children	Four children	Five or more children	
Urban						
Number	26	51	37	9	2	125
Percentage	20.8	40.8	29.6	7.2	1.6	100.0
Rural						
Number	62	85	60	21	8	236
Percentage	26.3	36.0	25.4	8.9	3.3	100.0
Estate						
Number	8	16	9	5	1	39
Percentage	20.5	41.0	23.1	12.8	2.6	100.0
Total						
Number	96	152	106	35	11	400
Percentage	24.0	38.0	26.5	8.8	2.8	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

Figure 7.1 Percentage distribution of migrant women by number of children and sector



Source: 2008 female migration survey

areas. The Demographic and Health Survey of Sri Lanka in 2006/07 also reported that the TFR of estate women was 2.6 (DC&S 2008e, p.8). The average of 2.3 children that a migrant woman in this study have indicates Sri Lankan women who departed for foreign employment overseas in 2008 left behind approximately a quarter of a million of children. As reported by the Save the Children (2006, p. 2), approximately one million Sri Lankan children have been left behind by the total stock of women migrants overseas. The number of children left behind by the migrant women in this study was approximately 1000 children.

7.3 Leaving their children to care for the children of other mothers

Most of the Sri Lankan domestic workers in this study (about 80 per cent) have become part of the global care chain process by migrating to care for children and aged people in high-income countries for pay. Hochschild (2000b, p.33) explains how women are involved in the global care chain process as shown in the following quote:

An older daughter from a poor family in a third world country cares for her siblings (the first link in the chain) while her mother as a nanny caring for the children of a nanny migrating to a first world country (the second link) who, in turn, cares for the child of a family in a rich country (the final link). A global care might start with in a poor country and end in a rich one.....

To identify the involvement of Sri Lankan women in a global care chain, a question about the nature of work overseas was asked from the respondents. Only 17 respondents who were family members did not know the nature of work of the migrants. Responses given by the other 383 respondents are shown in Table 7.3. Childcare is the activity performed by nearly three quarters of the migrants. While only 1.3 per cent had engaged in childcare work alone, 60.1 per cent performed childcare together with other activities, which include cooking and cleaning. Another 11.7 per cent were overburdened with many activities including childcare, age care, cleaning, and cooking, and only 5 per cent were entrusted with aged care and other work. Only about one fifth of these migrants were not involved in the “care chain” process as they did not perform care activities and were involved in cooking, cleaning, and washing vehicles.

Table 7.3 The nature of work of migrant women overseas

Nature of work overseas	Number	Percentage
Childcare	5	1.3
Childcare and other work	230	60.1
Childcare, age care and other work	45	11.7
Age care and other work	18	4.7
Other work	85	22.2
Total	383	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

Yeates (2005, p. 2) reports that women in high-income countries find it difficult to perform care and other household activities without working a “double day” as many women are entering paid employment. In order to be free from this “double day” work, some women of high-income families employ females from other countries of Asia. In responding to this demand, Sri Lankan women are migrating to take up paid domestic work (Save the Children 2006; Ratnayake 1999). By doing this, these women pass the responsibility of childcare to other persons in the household as Hochschild (2000b) emphasises in the above quote.

Out of the total migrant families, 50.2 per cent were extended families at the time of migration, and it increased to 53.8 per cent with the migration of women (Table 7.4). The increase was found in both urban and rural areas due to the fact in some cases an extended family member has moved into the household at the time of migration to help in the care of children while the mother is overseas. In contrast, the percentage of extended families has decreased in estate areas. It appears that extended family members in estate areas are reluctant to take the household and childcare responsibilities in the absence of the migrant women. The highest percentage of nuclear families was found in rural areas.

It is important to assess how adequate is the care given by other family members when the “light of the home” is abroad. The extended family often provides substantial support to transnational families (Bryant 2005). According to Parrenas (2001a), in the Philippines, it is mostly other relatives and not fathers who care for the children left behind. The study of Save the Children (2006) reported that most of the primary caregivers in Sri Lanka are close

relatives, and only a quarter were cared for by fathers. However, it was found in this study that the husband was the main person in charge of childcare while the mother was overseas.

Table 7.4 Distribution of the type of migrant families by sector: at the time of migration and at the time of the survey

Type of family	Sector (Percentage)						Total sample	
	Urban		Rural		Estate		At the time of migration	At the time of the survey
	At the time of migration	At the time of the survey	At the time of migration	At the time of the survey	At the time of migration	At the time of the survey		
Nuclear family	45.6	35.2	52.5	51.7	46.2	48.7	49.8	46.2
Extended family	54.4	64.8	47.5	48.3	53.8	51.3	50.2	53.8
Total number and percentage	31.3 (N=125)		59.0 (N=236)		9.8 (N=39)		100.0 (N=400)	

Source: 2008 female migration survey

Table 7.5 shows that in nearly 70 per cent of the households, the husband was the person mainly responsible for childcare, which is similar for all three sectors: urban, rural and estate. This reflects the fact that with the transformation from extended family to nuclear family in Sri Lanka (De Silva 2005), nuclear family members, especially the fathers of children, have to take the responsibility of both childcare and household activities in the absence their wives. However, when these fathers are overburdened with household, childcare, and economic activities, they have little time for childcare activities. However, the support given by the migrants' parents is higher in the estate sector and the responsibility given for the eldest child is higher in the urban sector. Hochschild (2000b, p.33) explains that in the Philippines, migrant women pass the responsibility of childcare to the eldest daughter or a nanny. However, in Sri Lanka, in most cases, the fathers together with extended family members take responsibility for childcare. In the estate sector where the extended family system was weaker, no other extended family members were involved in childcare other than the husband or parents of the migrant women. Only one household in the urban sector had received support from an institution.

Table 7.5 Main person responsible for childcare in the absence of mother by sector

Person mainly responsible for childcare		Sector			Total
		Urban	Rural	Estate	
Husband	Number	85	157	26	268
	Percentage	68.0	68.3	66.7	68.0
Parents	Number	26	54	13	93
	Percentage	20.8	23.5	33.3	23.6
Other relatives	Number	8	15	0	23
	Percentage	6.4	6.5	0.0	5.8
Eldest child	Number	5	4	0	9
	Percentage	4.0	1.7	0.0	2.3
Institution	Number	1	0	0	1
	Percentage	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.3
Total	Number	125	230	39	394
	Percentage	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

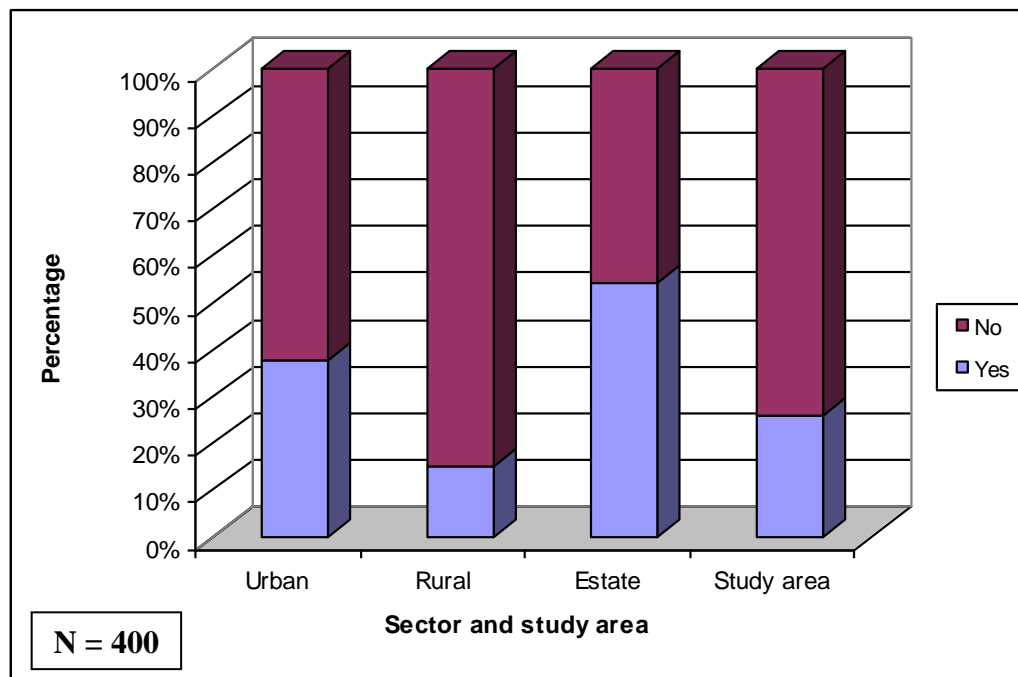
Source: 2008 female migration survey

It is evident that the majority of migrants rely on their spouses for the care of their children with additional support from extended family. In doing so, as Fresnoza-Flot (2009) points out, these women throw the domestic burden, of childcare and household activities, on husbands so that they can earn more money to improve the living condition of their family. However, these men may perceive the new role they are assigned as temporary since the women migrate for the period of a contract. In this study, the median duration of work abroad was 5 years although the usual contract period is for two years. Fresnoza-Flot (2009) argues that, when the childcare responsibility transfers to the father, they bear a psychological burden since they have not been involved in childcare before the migration of their spouses. Moreover, when a woman stays away from her family for a length of time, it may be difficult for the migrant to resolve her roles as a mother and worker.

Among those who did not leave the husband in charge of children (124 households), 62 per cent did so because they were divorced, separated, or widowed. About 12 per cent indicated that they had concerns about their husbands' behaviour, especially in relation to drugs and alcohol. For another 10.5 per cent of the families, husbands also were absent overseas while

another 9.7 indicated their husband's work prevented them from caring for the children. Small numbers indicated that they preferred to leave their children with their mother, some husbands had disappeared and one was imprisoned. However, of all respondents, little more than a quarter (Figure 7.2) reported that they needed institutional support for childcare, especially with educational facilities. The requirement is higher for estate migrant families and lower for rural families.

Figure 7.2 Percentage distribution of migrant families who reported the requirement for institutional childcare support by sector



Source: 2008 female migration survey

Most of the respondents reported that the children managed their lives adequately while their mother was away, and almost all children lived happily with their caregivers (Table 7.6). Little more than a tenth indicated that their children were very happy during the absence of their mothers and another tenth were moderately happy. While three quarters indicated that their children were happy, only less than 5 percent indicated their children were unhappy. This suggests that family members have played a key role in assisting with childcare during the mother's absence. It is also interesting that 95.3 percent of the returned migrants reported that the childcare arrangements they made before going overseas were adequate.

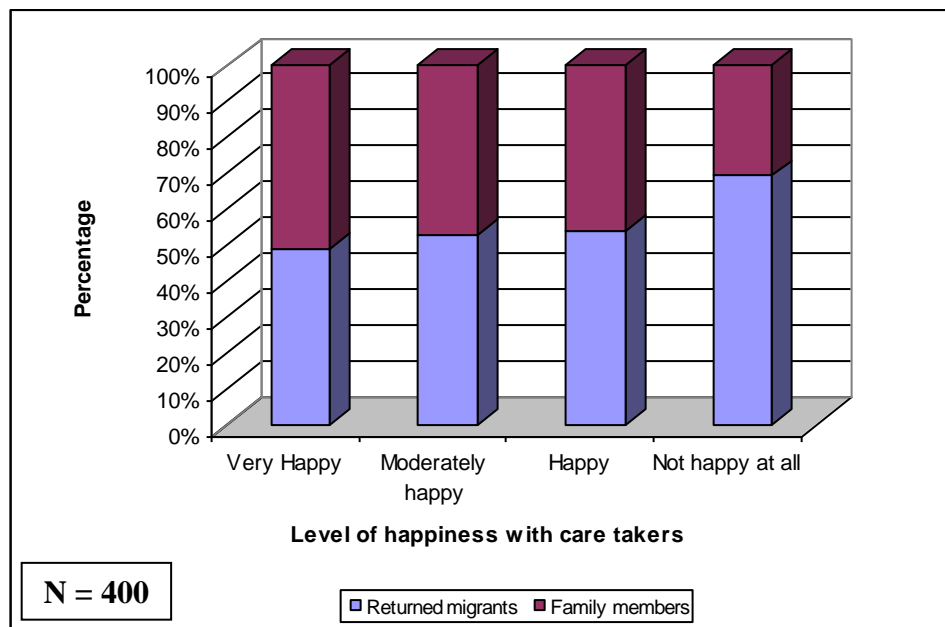
Table 7.6 Opinion of the respondents on children’s happiness with caregivers

Level of happiness	Number	Percentage
Very happy	48	12.0
Moderately happy	38	9.5
Happy	300	75.0
Not happy at all	14	3.5
Total	400	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

The happiness of children with caregivers was examined by two different categories of respondents as depicted in Figure 7.3. There appears to be no significant response bias in reporting the happiness of children with caregivers since the proportions of both returned migrants and family members who stated that their children were very happy, moderately happy, and happy are almost equal. However, out of the 13 respondents who reported that children were not happy at all with caregivers, nine women were returned migrants. Similar findings have been reported by the study of Save the Children (2006, p.16), which interviewed 400 children. According to the Save the Children, a high level of positive interactions was

Figure 7.3 Opinion of respondents on the happiness with caregivers



Source: 2008 female migration survey

reported between the primary caregivers and the children. This indicates that the caregivers gave considerable emotional support to their children. In addition, in the Save the Children (2006, p.16) study, 96 per cent of the children aged 6-17 years reported that they were close to their caregivers and 95 per cent reported that they exchanged ideas and emotions with their caregivers. Similarly, the opinion of 95 per cent of the children was that the care that they received was adequate; and 89.5 per cent reported that, in general, they did not have problems with their caregivers. The opinion of the FGD participants in this study was that problems still arise among the children left behind even in the presence of other relatives although they provide a considerable support to the children left behind. Although mothers send money for the education of children and gifts, children need the emotional support of their mothers, and the emotional strains left by the mother's departure are not simply filled by caregivers.

7.4 Consequences of distant mothering

The absence of mothers due to migration can have both positive and negative consequences on the well-being of the children left behind. There are a number of studies in Asia, which investigated and discussed these issues (for example, Yeoh and Lam 2007; Save the Children 2006; Bryant 2005; Asis *et al.* 2004; Parrenas 2002, 2001a; Gamburd 2000; Battistella and Conaco 1998, 1996). Bryant (2005), using the evidence from the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand, explains that the migration of a father or a mother improves the material well-being of children left behind, especially in terms of health and schooling. However, Parrenas (2001a, p.376) highlights the negative consequences of mothers' migration as shown in the following quote:

The pain of family separation as a result of mother's migration creates various feelings including loneliness, helplessness, regret, and guilt of mothers [as well as] vulnerability and insecurity for children among others.

However, mother's absence does not always have negative consequences on children due to two reasons. Firstly, many of the mothers do not totally abandon their children but continue to take the responsibility of childcare from abroad. Secondly, many migrant families are able to cope with the challenges of family separation with the support of family members (Save the Children 2006; Parrenas 2005b, 2005c, 2002; Hugo 2002, 1995; Asis 2001; Battistella and Conaco 1998, 1996). This is especially the case where there are strong extended family

systems in the origin areas (Hugo 2005c). The involvement of extended family members in childcare mitigates social costs due to the mothers' absence (Bryant 2005). In the opinion of Fernando (1989), in areas where the extended family system is more diluted, the adverse impact on children would be stronger. The study of Save the Children (2006) in Sri Lanka found that the migration of mothers not only strengthened the roles of extended families but also the role of fathers. However, Titu Eki (2002) shows that although specific emotional and behavioural problems of children were identified due to the migration of mothers, their migration did not affect the upbringing of children due to the support given by family members at home.

However, the findings from the studies of mothers' migration on the well-being of the children left behind are mixed. Yeoh and Lam (2007) show that the children of the migrant mothers in the Philippines are in a position to adjust well socially because of the support they receive from their family members in the absence of their mothers. The overall well-being of children of migrants is generally better than the children of non-migrants (Bryant 2005; SMC *et al.* 2004). In terms of the physical health, as Yeoh and Lam (2007) and Bryant (2005) report, the children of migrant mothers were heavier and fell ill less frequently when compared with children of non-migrants. In contrast, Filipino children with absent mothers showed poorer social adjustments (Battistella and Conaco 1998). These children have faced problems with friends, classmates, relations, siblings as well as other personal problems in the absence of their mothers (Battistella and Conaco 1996). Although extended family members substitute for parents in these situations in the Philippines, the consultation they give may not be adequate (Battistella and Conaco 1996). According to Battistella and Conaco (1996), the children left behind understand the efforts of their mothers to raise the family although they encounter psychological and emotional problems. This is true among all migrant communities where the role of care giving continues to fall on women's shoulders even after migration (Dreby 2006; Spitzer *et al.* 2003). Moreover, fathers and extended family members play a key role in looking after these children (Asis 2006; Parrenas 2005b, 2005c, 2002).

In Sri Lanka, the study of Save the Children (2006) also reported that children left behind have positive relationships with their caregivers. Nonetheless, this study also reaffirms the findings of Jampaklay (2006) in Thailand, which says that a mother's love is often irreplaceable, even by the best caregivers. A study of 2000 households of Gulf returnees in 17 districts in Sri

Lanka shows that 45 per cent of women had experienced at least one adverse consequence of migration in differing degrees of intensity, while 33 per cent had faced family related problems (Perera 1997, p.12). However, only 9 per cent were of the view that the social costs of migration outweighed the few benefits they had obtained. The disruption of children's education, children going astray, husbands taking to alcohol, and the sexual abuse of females in the household are some of the social problems identified in the study of Perera (1997). Fernando (1989) found that the migration of women disturbs domestic activities, which most husbands and children cannot cope with. Fernando (1989) further argues that the migration of women for two, three, and sometimes four years can drastically change the lives of their family especially those of young children. The migrant families experience both positive and negative impacts, and what appears consistent in the various studies is that the children with migrant mothers tend to have more difficulties academically and perform more poorly in terms of their physical and emotional health (Yeoh and Lam 2007; Asis 2006; Battistella and Conaco 1998).

The literature discussed above indicate that migration of mothers can have both positive and negative impacts on the children left behind in terms of education, emotional strains, behavioural changes, health, and protection of children. In many situations, migration improves the education and health of children. In relation to the behaviour of children, emotional strains and the protection of children, negative impacts are higher than the positive impacts. However, these impacts could not be solely positive or negative. Extended family members, generally, play a key role in reducing the negative impacts in many of the female migrant families. Findings of this study in relation to these aspects are discussed in the subsequent sections.

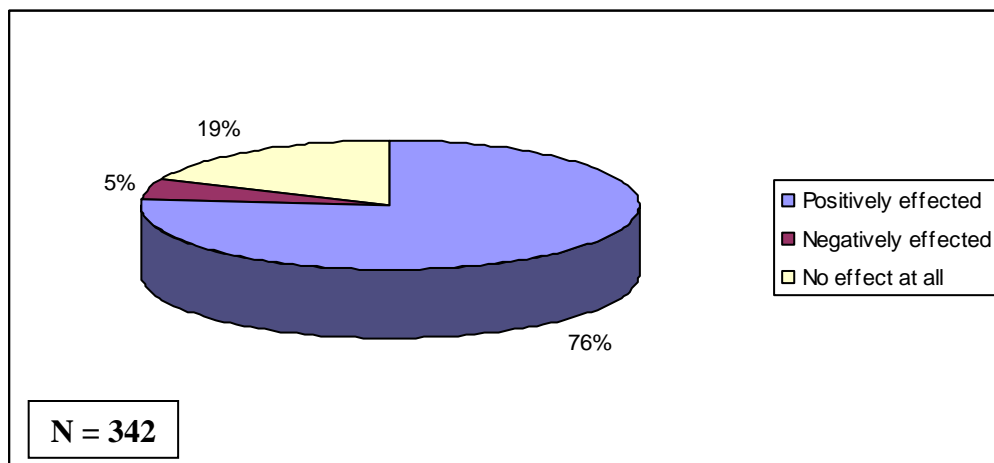
7.4.1 Education of children

Reviewing the studies of some Asian countries such as the Philippines, China, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, Yeoh and Lam (2007) conclude that the impact of migration of mothers on children's education is mixed. This complexity is also apparent in the findings of the Sri Lankan studies. For example, the educational performance of children left behind by mothers is lower than for those who live with mothers working in Sri Lanka (Gamburd 2000). Gamburd (2005) found that the children of migrant mothers tend to drop out of school to look for work or help with household chores. The study of Save the Children (2006) found that

children with migrant mothers have poorer attendance and performance at school, and the children left behind in rural areas did better in school but emotionally felt more lonely and sad owing to the departure of one or both parents. However, a variety of factors such as the education of mothers, socio-economic levels of families, children's interest in education, expenditure patterns of the families, encouragement from family members on children's education, and how children understand their mothers' sacrifice in improving the family well-being can influence the education of children in Sri Lanka.

About 86 of the migrant families (342 households) had children of school going age at the time they worked overseas. These families were asked their opinion about the impact of the mother's migration on the education of children, and a little more than 75 per cent reported the impact to be positive (Figure 7.4). This is mainly due to the enhanced ability to pay the costs associated with education – tuition fees, books, ability to bear the transportation costs to school, and other requirements. Only 17 respondents (5 per cent) indicated that there is a negative effect on children's education while a further 18.7 per cent indicated that the mother's absence had no effect at all. These negative effects are the discontinuation of education and the lack of interest in education. This suggests that the absence of the mother for a long period can have an influence on children's education to a certain extent. In 2001, about 6.3 per cent of children between the aged 6-14 years in Sri Lanka did not attend school; therefore, it is difficult to conclude that migration of mothers is the sole reason that can impact negatively on children's education.

Figure 7.4 Impacts of mothers' earnings on children's education



Source: 2008 female migration survey

For 56.7 per cent of the families, the fathers of children supported their children's education at home (Table 7.7). This means that fathers helped children in doing their homework, and encouraged them to study at home. Of the fathers who supported their children's education at home, about 60 per cent did so with the help of other family members, while 18.7 per cent were grandparents, 5.3 per cent were siblings, and 11.7 per cent were other relatives. The eldest sisters are the majority among the siblings. However, another 7.6 per cent did not receive any support at all. Save the Children (2006) has also reported similar findings. While 52.2 per cent of fathers spent half to three and a half hours on education related activities, 42.4 per cent of fathers spent no time at all supporting children's education (Save the Children 2006, p.17). These findings indicate that in Sri Lanka, the support from fathers of children and extended family members in the education of children is substantial in migrant families.

Table 7.7 Number and percentage of migrant families by the persons who supported children's education in the absence of their mothers

Persons who supported children's education	Number	Percentage
Father	78	22.8
Father and other family members	116	33.9
Grand parents	22	6.4
Grandparents and other family members	42	12.3
Eldest sibling	18	5.3
Other relatives	40	11.7
No support at all	26	7.6
Total	342	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

Views of the participants in FGDs, especially the teachers, are important in examining the impact of mothers' migration on their children's education. Teachers conveyed their views on the behaviours of children in school and their educational performance. As reported by the household respondents, teachers also had a view that children of migrant women do not have financial problems like other children with similar socio-economic background because of the enhanced financial ability to pay the costs associated with their education. These children continue their education at least to elementary school. In comparison to other children of similar backgrounds, they wear school uniforms and shoes neatly, but some children of

migrants used to wear very expensive shoes, which are not affordable by low-income families. Another observation of these teachers is the higher school performance of the migrants' children in school hostels than those living with family members. Teachers also observed the lack of interest in education among these children including the completion of homework and non-participation in common activities in school. In addition, they showed poor leadership in educational activities. Another view expressed in the discussion was that some children who have talents in education do not show interest because they want to get revenge on their mothers for not being at home. The parent-teacher relationship is an important aspect of the education of children. As teachers said, mothers are the representatives in parent-teacher meetings. When the mother is away, representation of the father or any other member of the migrant families is minimal. Therefore, the lack of involvement in these meeting was seen to influence children's development.

Although migrant women spend more money on education than non-migrants, teachers who participated in FGDs perceived that the lack of love and affection had a negative effect on school performances. Caretakers tend to be as interested as mothers in the children's mental and educational well-being. However, many children were able to continue their education because of their mother's migration, which is similar to the views expressed by the returned migrants and family members. In this case these children had better access to needed supplies such as books, pens, pencils, and other requirements. This finding is consistent with that of Eelens (1995) who interviewed 45 teachers in Colombo. However, according to the FGD participants, the migration of mothers is not the only reason for the negative effects on children's education. There are other reasons such as the socio-economic level of the family and the mother's education. This is reflected in the opinion of a respondent who had better education than other respondents in this survey. She had a strong view that her migration had a positive impact on her children's education as they were able to complete university education.

Save the Children (2006) study revealed that absenteeism and rowdy behaviour are far more prevalent in children whose mothers were abroad. Even when their mothers return, the behaviour patterns are hard to change. Standards of school work are far below the required level, and the mothers' interest in children's schooling is much less than non migrant mothers. Several female teachers in Save the Children (2006) study have reported that many young

children whose mothers had migrated were in need of affection and were likely to place the teacher in the role of the mother figure. In such situations, teachers are often seen as “surrogate mothers” (Save the Children 2006). The gravity of the lack of proper childcare is reflected in children dropping out of school, drug addiction and, in some cases, being physically abused by relatives, including fathers.

Many of the responses of the FGD participants are related to the negative effect of mothers’ migration. This leads to several other questions. Will the situation change if these mothers do not migrate? Will there be no negative effects if the migrant is the father? What is the situation of the children in non-migrant families? Is the absence of the mother the only reason for the lack of education of children? Further investigations are needed to answer these questions. However, the provision of their children with a better future is one of the reasons for women’s migration for work abroad. Yet, education is critically affected in the absence of an adequate caring and educationally supportive home environment. The findings of this study clearly show the need for additional support in the education of children of migrant mothers. Participants of the FGDs strongly recommended that the Parent Teacher Associations could be one of the several organisations at the community level that could be more effectively utilised to assist families of migrant mothers in coping with the problems that they face.

7.4.2 Emotional strains and behavioural changes³⁰ in children

Emotionally and behaviourally, the absence of the mother due to foreign employment is found to have an effect on children (Save the Children 2006). According to Parrenas (2001a), children suffer from the emotional strains of geographical distance with feelings of loneliness, insecurity, and vulnerability. Parrenas (2001a) has analysed the emotional consequences of geographical distance in female-headed transnational families and examined the mechanisms by which mothers and children cope with them. Children without mothers seem to have more problems compared to children without the father and also children of non-migrant families (Battistella Conaco 1998).

In this study, 60 out of the 400 households reported that the children remaining at home suffered significant problems when the respondents were asked their opinion about the

³⁰ Behavioural changes of children in the absence of mothers were assessed through subjective responses to specific questions, and did not involve rating scales

problems faced by the children due to the absence of their mothers (Table 7.8). Of these, mental and physical health problems were mentioned most, along with the emotional strains associated with loneliness and lack of care. Behavioural problems among children left behind were also mentioned as being significant as problems with schooling. Bad behaviour includes three cases of drug users. Moreover, two incidences of sexual abuse and five incidences of physical abuse were also reported. Only three respondents reported other problems.

Table 7.8 Problems faced by the children in the absence of their mothers

Problem identified	Number	Percentage
Physical and mental health problems	12	20.0
Loneliness	12	20.0
Lack of care	12	20.0
Bad behaviour	8	13.3
Verbal and physical abuse	7	11.6
Educational problems	6	10.0
Other	3	5.1
Total	60	100.0

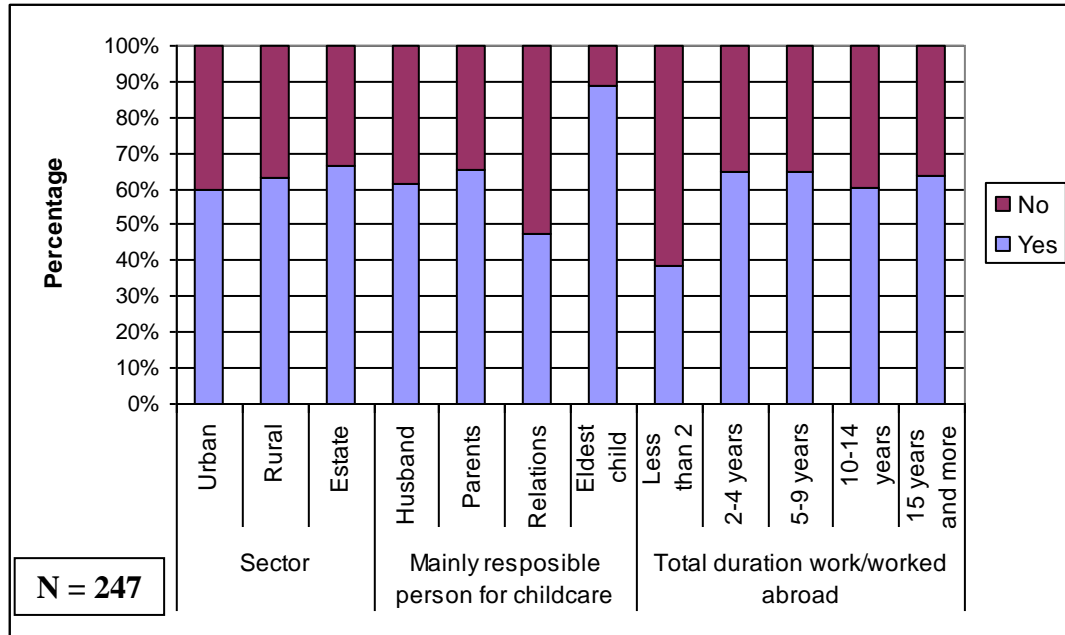
Source: 2008 female migration survey

Although information on emotional strains on children were not directly gathered in this study, respondents were asked their opinion about behavioural changes in children while their mothers were overseas, and nearly two thirds (62 percent) identified such changes. According to Figure 7.5, changes in behaviour are higher among estate children, who did not get support from their relations for caring, followed by rural children. When the eldest child is the carer, behavioural changes are much higher than if relatives are the carers. The respondents reported higher percentages of behavioural changes when the duration of work abroad is more than 2 years.

Table 7.9 shows only the major changes in the behaviour of children reported by the respondents. Problems of disobedience, moodiness, and increased problems at school are the major issues. Joining gangs and use of alcohol and drugs are also seen as other negative impacts as perceived by nearly 10 per cent of the respondents. It is also interesting to note that a little more than 80 per cent of the respondents identified more than one behavioural change

among children. This would suggest that there are widespread influences of mothers' absence on children's behaviour, an issue that needs to be investigated in greater depth.

Figure 7.5 Proportion of households reported a change in the behaviour in children



Source: 2008 female migration survey

Table 7.9 Changes in the behaviour of children in the absence of mother

Behavioural change	Number	Percentage
Increased problems at school	106	42.9
Disobedience	60	24.3
Moodiness – temper tantrums	34	13.8
Health related behaviour	16	6.5
Joining gangs	16	6.5
Use of alcohol and drugs	12	4.8
Isolation from the other	3	1.2
Total	247	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

The literature indicates that in some cases the absence of parents can have an adverse impact on the behaviour of children (Hugo 1992, p.193). Table 7.10 shows that in this study, more

than two thirds of the respondents indicated that they considered mothers' migration did have an effect on children's behaviour. The effect is higher in estate areas and lower in urban area. As reported earlier, the support received from extended family members is low in estate areas compared to urban and rural areas. The literature does suggest that children can become more unruly when their parents migrate and this appears to be the case in Sri Lanka as well. Emotional issues that are experienced by children when their mothers are away for an extended period can be compensated to some extent by the involvement of their fathers, older children, and other relations in childcare.

Table 7.10 Whether the behaviour of children was affected by mother's migration

Sector	Percentage		Number
	Yes	No	
Urban	60	40	125
Rural	64	36	236
Estate	67	33	39
Total	63	37	400

Source: 2008 female migration survey

Caregivers in the study of Save the Children (2006) reported certain negative behaviours of children, though not in the majority, after their mothers leave. Some of these behaviours include loss of appetite, weight loss for children under five years of age, and temper tantrums among those of all ages, especially adolescents. Children between 6 and 17 years old also feel lonely and/or sad. In the study of Save the Children (2006), the incidences of abuse were not high and there were no higher levels of violence from fathers in the absence of mothers. Unfortunately, the situation is worse for children with mental and physical disabilities. Children with disabilities are often neglected, have low hygiene levels, and many of them are not in school.

The children of migrants often involve themselves in bad activities such as use of alcohol and drugs and watching bad movies, which are not approved by the society. They persuade other students to be involved in these activities as reported by the FGD participants. This is due to the money that they get from their mothers abroad. According to the views of teachers, some

migrant women believe that sending money for their children is one way of coping with the emotional strains of children due to separation. In addition, there are behavioural changes that were expressed by the FGD participants. These are the prevalence of child abuse, especially sexual abuse, living in groups outside home, lessening parent child relationship, and having love affairs, and early marriage.

They had the view that even when some migrants return home for a short a period, they do not want to look after their children. Their status is not compatible with other members of the family. They do not get on with them since they are used to living in a completely different environment. It is evident that the views of the participants in focus groups are inclined more towards the negative side of migration than the views of the respondents of the survey because of their attention on the social costs of migration rather than the economic benefits that the migrant families receive.

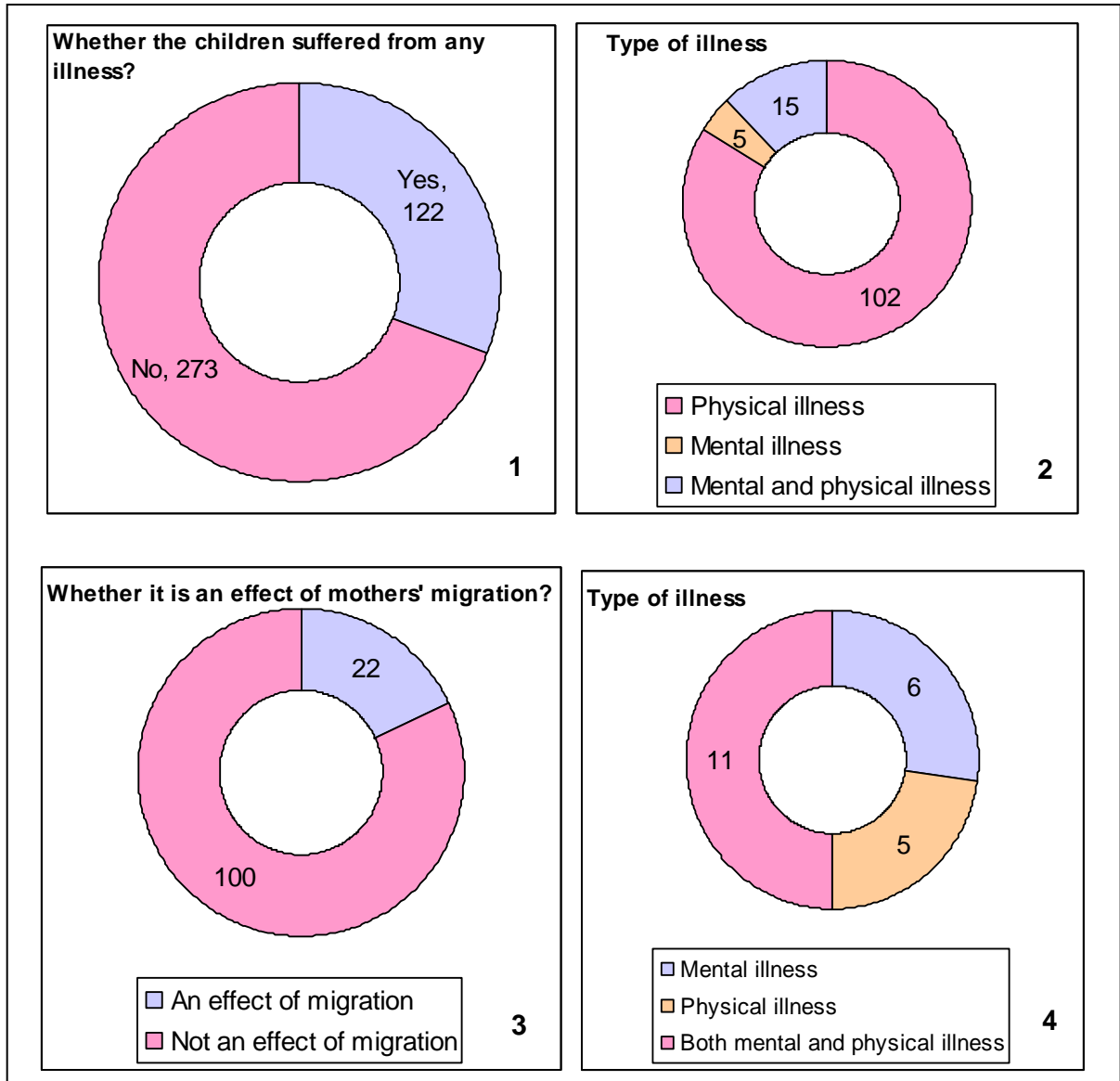
7.4.3 Health of children

Health of children is another important aspect to be considered when women migrate overseas for employment. Hugo (2005c) also found that there are negative consequences of migration of Indonesian women as domestic workers on children's health. Diagram No. 1 in Figure 7.6 indicates that children in 122 migrant families (30.5 per cent) had health problems in the absence of their mothers. Out of these 122 respondents, 84 per cent (102 cases) reported the illness as physical, 12 per cent (15 cases) as both mental and physical, and only 4 per cent (5 cases) as mental as shown in Diagram 2. However, less than a fifth (22 cases) reported that the illness is attributed to the absence of the mother (Diagram 3). Out of these 22 families, 17 have reported (77 per cent) the illness as mental (Diagram 4). It is possible to assume that among those who suffered from illnesses due to the absence of the mother, mental illnesses are common. A participant in FGD also revealed that there are many cases of mental illnesses rather than cases of sexual abuse.

7.4.4 Child abuse

Behind the benefits children receive are some sad stories of child abuse as revealed in FGDs. According to them child abuse has become one of the major concerns of women's migration among policy makers and the public in the recent past in Sri Lanka. Save the children (2006) acknowledged that child abuse in Sri Lanka is an increasingly serious problem and children

Figure 7.6 Number of migrant families who reported an illness of children and type of illness



Source: 2008 female migration survey

with migrant mothers are identified to be more vulnerable. A medical doctor who participated in FGD of this study confirmed this view. These incidents include child labour, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, kidnapping and neglect, most of which are not reported. In addition, media also reports such cases from time to time. Following are some of the reported cases of sexual abuses of the children of migrant women:

- a fourteen year old girl was sexually abused by a 26 years old unmarried man - this had happened when nobody was at home (*Island September 2007*);
- a fourteen years old girl was sexually abused by her step father (*Island March 2007*); and
- fourteen year and 11 year old girls were sexually abused by their father (*Island September 2007*).

Only 16 respondents of the survey reported that the children of migrant mothers faced abuse in the absence of their mothers. Among them, there are four reported incidences of sexual abuse. Although newspapers report that such cases of sexual abuse of children are prevalent among the children of the migrant households, according to the FGD participants, migrant households do not like to disclose them to the public. However, according to them, such cases are not highly prevalent, and yet some reported cases emerged from the sampled households. For example, a Grama Niladhari in FGD reported abuse of a girl by her grandfather. Moreover, the study did not indicate high levels of violence by fathers against children. However, it is worth noting that there are some cases of early marriages of children due to the migration of mothers. Therefore, a strong call for a child protection service at the community level has emerged from this study

7.5 Negotiating care work in the transnational family

Migrant mothers do not abandon their children (Parrenas 2005b, 2005c, 2002) as mentioned earlier, even though the critics claim that mothers should stay at home with their children (Parrenas 2002; Gamburd 2000). Migrant mothers attempt to maintain the responsibility of nurturing their children while abroad (Parrenas 2005b, 2002), and maintain intimacy across borders indicating that many migrant mothers remain responsible for ensuring both the economic and emotional security of their children (Parrenas 2005a, 2005b). However, transnational mothers face the challenge of providing care to their children and find many ways to cope with family separation (Parrenas 2005b, 2001a). Sending remittances and gifts, making telephone calls and writing letters, and turning to their extended family to care for their children are some of the alternative ways available to these migrant mothers (Fresnoza-Flot 2009; Parrenas 2005b). Similarly, Sri Lankan domestic workers use these alternative

ways to negotiate their care needs in transnational space as found in this study. They have helped to establish concrete ties with their children.

7.5.1 Transnational Communication

Both mothers and their children suffer due to long-term separation (UNFPA 2006) but try to maintain intimacy from afar. Levitt (2001, p.22) explains:

new technologies heighten the immediacy and frequency of migrants' contact with their sending communities and allow them to be actively involved in everyday life.

Consequently, one of the strategies adopted by Sri Lankan women is transnational communication in terms of telephone and letter writing to maintain familiar contacts across borders and to repress their emotional feelings. By transnational communication, Parrenas (2005b) refers to the flow of ideas, information, goods, money, and emotions between family members in different countries.

The mode of communication used by migrant mothers in this study to maintain intimacy with their family members, especially with children at home, is shown in Table 7.11. As shown in the table, only a very small number (7 of the 400 individuals) failed to communicate with home while they were away. Post is the most popular means of communication with 71 per

Table 7.11 Mode of communication with family members by sector

Mode of communication	Sector (Percentage)			Total Percentage
	Urban	Rural	Estate	
Air mail	8.8	21.6	10.3	16.5
Air mail and land phone	43.2	33.1	51.3	38.0
Air mail and mobile phone	9.6	12.3	23.1	12.5
Air mail, land and mobile phone	4.8	4.2	0.0	4.0
Land phone	21.6	21.2	12.8	20.5
Land phone and mobile phone	7.2	0.8	0.0	2.8
Mobile phone	2.4	5.5	0.0	4.0
No contact at all	2.4	1.3	2.6	1.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

cent followed by land phones (65.3 per cent). In estate areas, the post is the frequently used (84.7 per cent) compared with rural (71.2 per cent) and urban areas (66.4 per cent).

Use of land phones is higher in urban areas (76.8 per cent) compared to the use by estate (64.1 per cent) and rural families (59.3 per cent). It is noticeable that mobile phones were used by little more than a fifth in both urban and rural areas. The dominance of the telephone is interesting although post still plays an important role. It is apparent however, that the use of modern forms of electronic communication among the domestic workers is very limited especially access to the internet. Only four households had a computer and they were able to buy it as a result of migration.

Some of the studies in the Philippines (Yeoh and Lam 2007; Asis 2006; Asis *et al.* 2004; SMC *et al.* 2004) have reported that there is a regular and, in some cases, increased communication between the migrant and those left behind. According to these studies, communication technology has allowed migrant mothers to be involved in day-to-day decisions in the form of telephone calls, letter writing, and especially text messaging (Parrenas 2005b). The 2003 Survey conducted in the Philippines (SMC *et al.* 2004) found that migrant parents have higher ownership of landline telephones and mobile phones compared with non-migrant families. The increase in ownership of telecommunication devices is both a product as well as a facilitator of migration. With increased household income from migration, migrants' families were able to purchase devices to facilitate communication with the absent parent(s) and allow for parenting to continue across borders. Parrena's (2002) study of young adults in the Philippines also showed that communication with parents helps to lessen the negative impact of migration and makes it easier for children to come to terms with their parent's absence. The Philippines has the greatest rate of text messaging among the countries of the world because of the large numbers of family members who are overseas at any point in time (Asis 2006; Yeoh and Lam 2006; Parrenas 2005a; SMC *et al.* 2004). However, due to a variety of factors such as social inequalities, residence (urban or rural), and income, such transnational communication is not uniformly available throughout the Philippines.

Nearly two thirds of Sri Lankan migrant women in this study had contacts with their families once a month and another 31.3 per cent weekly. While another 5.8 per cent had contacts once in three or six months, and only 1.8 per cent had no contacts at all. In doing so, they keep

abreast of their children's activities and at the same time achieve a certain level of familiarity and intimacy. As shown in Table 7.12, the most frequently contacted person is her husband (61.3 per cent). Children are frequently contacted by 48.6 per cent of the mothers whereas other family members, 28.5 per cent. While the husband and children combination is most popular among urban and rural families, the other family option is most popular among estate families.

Table 7.12 Frequently contacted person by sector

Persons frequently contacted	Sector (Percentage)			Total Percentage
	Urban	Rural	Estate	
Husband	44.3	31.3	42.1	36.4
Husband and children	18.0	30.5	13.2	24.9
Children	9.0	11.2	7.9	10.2
Children and other family members	11.5	14.6	13.2	13.5
Other family members	17.2	12.4	23.7	15.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

A question was asked to find out whether the migrant used to discuss the problems the children had over the phone or by letters with her husband, children or other carers, and 82.5 per cent reported that they did so. There were multiple responses to this and Table 7.13 shows only the most popular responses to the question. As mentioned earlier, the emotional pain of separation of the mother and child is evident in the fact that loneliness was discussed by 35 percent of respondents in talking to their children while they were away. In addition, issues associated with childcare were discussed by 13.3 percent of the migrants. Education was another matter discussed frequently. Moreover, almost all felt that this discussion assisted in reducing the effect of the children's problems. These respondents were also asked their opinion on the effect of the discussions the migrants had with their children over the phone and by letters to reduce the problems of the children. About 29 per cent of the respondents reported that the discussions they had with their children helped immensely to reduce the problems and another 68.5 per cent said that they helped moderately. Only a small percentage (3 per cent) reported that the discussions the migrants had with their children did not help at all to reduce the

Table 7.13 Problems mothers discussed with their children in letters or phone calls by sector - multiple responses

Problems discussed	Sector (Percentage)			Total Percentage
	Urban	Rural	Estate	
No discussions held	31.2	20.8	25.6	24.5
Education/Health/Loneliness	19.2	15.7	17.9	16.5
Loneliness	16.8	8.1	20.5	12.0
Education and health	7.2	14.5	5.1	11.3
Education/Health/Childcare	12.8	8.8	2.6	9.3
Educational matters	4.0	11.9	2.6	8.5
Education and loneliness	3.2	8.5	5.1	6.5
Health problems	4.0	3.4	15.4	4.8
Problems of care taking	0.8	6.4	0.0	4.0
Financial problems	0.8	2.5	5.1	2.3

Source: 2008 female migration survey

problems the children had. This emphasises the fact that even if these women live far away from their children they try not to neglect their children.

7.5.2 Reciprocal visits

The length of time the mother is away from their families is important in examining the effects of mothers' migration. The usual contract signed is of two years duration and 90.8 percent of the migrants were, or intended to be, absent for this period. However, out of all 400 migrants, 51.4 per cent of the migrants in the study worked more than 5 years at the time of interviewing. Only 51 of the respondents had visited Sri Lanka during their contracts. The main reasons for the visits were the illness or death of a family member and the poor health of the migrant worker. However, 10 came back because of the problems experienced by their children. This meant that most children of migrant women live without seeing their mothers for a significant part of their childhood. It is apparent that the mother retained some of the nurturing role even though she was absent for an extended period.

It is argued that the absent mother's contact with a family member can have a significant bearing on the well-being of the child (Save the Children 2006). According to Save the Children (2006, p.15), nearly half the migrant mothers (49.9 per cent) maintained contact

through home visits while 21.4 per cent returned in less than 6 months and another 21.4 per cent returned in less than a year. Furthermore, nearly half of those who returned also stayed up to three months in Sri Lanka before leaving again, while the remainder stayed for much longer periods.

While there is a general belief among migrant mothers that the provisions they have made for looking after their children are adequate, findings of the study indicate many issues need more attention. More than a quarter of families reported the requirement of institutional support for childcare when the mother is overseas. It is interesting that almost half of the returned migrants did not recommend Sri Lankan women to work overseas. They found the social costs of migration outweigh the economic benefits because they realised that living with children is more important than earning money abroad. Some of the women realised that the family disruption is a big cost. However, many migrant mothers do not abandon their children but instead they continue to bear most of the responsibility for childcare even after leaving their countries and adapt their mothering role after migration (Asis 2006; Parrenas 2005b, 2002). This is true among all female migrant communities where the role of care giving continues to fall on women's shoulders before, during, and after migration.

7.6 Conclusion

In this age of migration, families have become transnational, with members dispersed in space, and migration has made it impossible for the family to physically be together all the time (Asis *et al.* 2004). The separation of migrant mothers from their children, irrespective of the duration of time, raises important challenges for both mothers and their children. The Sri Lankan government has employed, from time to time, a number of bureaucratic techniques to supervise, count, and regulate the migrant worker population but little attention has been paid to the impacts of mothers' migration on children. While most adult family members manage in the absence of the "light of the home", the separation of the mother from the family is especially difficult for the children. Despite the arrangements they made to accommodate the temporal separation of migration by rearranging and reassigning their gender roles to husbands and other family members, the migration of mothers raise some questions in relation to child development.

This chapter has examined the consequences of mothers' migration on the children left behind and how they negotiate their nurturing role from afar while focussing on the involvement in the "global care chain" process. The discussion has also identified some similarities and dissimilarities in the transnational mothering process between this study and other existing studies in Sri Lanka and other countries. One important finding is the involvement of fathers in childcare, in some cases, with the help of extended family members. The involvement of extended family members has become important due to the existence of both nuclear and extended families among these migrant households. Moreover, the prevalence of mental illnesses among children has been identified. However, whether the outcomes are positive or negative in strictly resource terms depends on a large number of factors of which a key one is the extent to which the work that migrants are doing is well rewarded in local terms. Moreover, the impression that mother's migration is not necessarily disruptive for the formation of the children left behind is inconclusive due to the lack of data that can be compared to the children of non-migrant families of similar socio-economic levels. To maintain intimacy with families at home, the migrant women used a variety of methods of communication. The next chapter will examine both economic and social impacts of women's migration on the family well-being.

CHAPTER 8

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACTS OF MIGRATION ON FAMILIES

Often, physical separation from the family is countenanced and justified by recourse to the idea that seeking work overseas is a household strategy to better the lot of the family. [Female domestic workers] often explained their migration stint as a means of fulfilling a family project, whether it was to put their children or siblings through school and college, or lift the family's economic circumstances.

(Asis et al. 2004, p. 204)

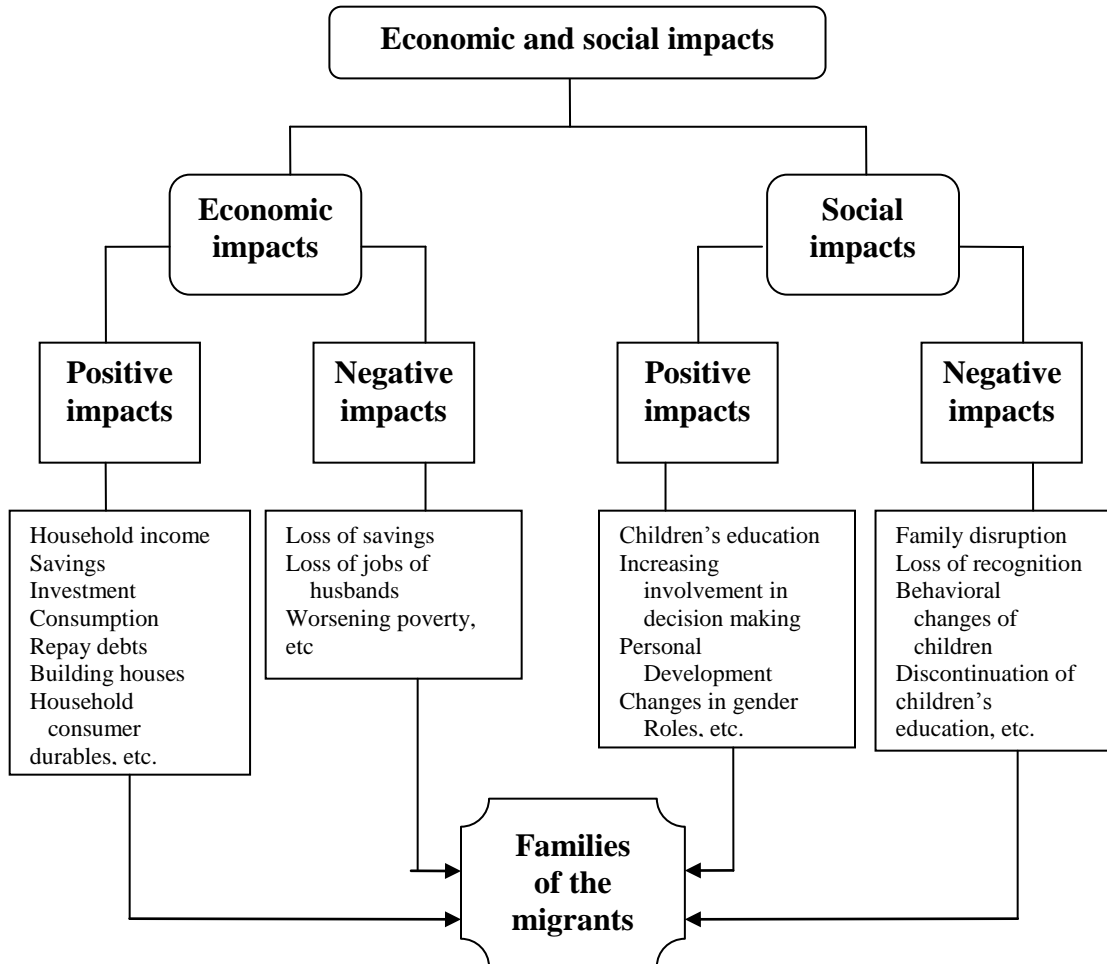
8.1 Introduction

Migrant families are influenced economically and socially through both monetary and social remittances (Ghosh 2008; Hugo and Ukwatta 2008; Eversole 2006; Silvey 2006; Wahyuni 2005; Hugo 2002). Monetary remittances increase the household income of migrant families, their savings, and investments (Figure 8.1). They improve the living conditions of migrant families as well by enhancing the ability to purchase family housing, lands, household consumer durables, etc. Social remittances, the transfer of ideas, information, knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviour patterns, identities, and cultures (Levitt and Nyberg-Sorensen 2004; Clawen 2002; Hugo 1995), change the life styles of migrants and their families (Figure 8.1). Moreover, migrant women belong to two families simultaneously during the period they work abroad. Life styles, customs, languages, food patterns, religious affiliations, behavioural patterns, and cultures between these two families are usually different. Therefore, the ideas, attitudes, behaviours, life styles as well as the expenditure patterns of migrants readily change when they adapt to a completely different environment while working abroad.

With economic and social remittance transfers, migrants and their family members adjust not only to the influences of 'the newly acquired money, goods, ideas, and innovations transmitted back to home' (Hugo 1994, p.15), but also to the temporary absence of the "light of the home" for several years. This temporary separation can change the gendered roles of migrant women as well as other family members at home (Figure 8.1). It can also create several problems at migrant's home such as family disruptions, changes in the behaviours of children, discontinuation of children's education, drug addiction and alcoholism by the husbands of migrants, etc. (Figure 8.1). However, the impacts of migration and adjustments to monetary and social remittances depend on several factors including the areas of residence in Sri Lanka,

their ethnic group, marital status, salaries abroad, and the duration the migrant women work abroad (Shaw 2008a; Eelens 1995).

Figure 8.1 The impacts of women's migration on families



The impacts of migration of female domestic workers on families has become a major concern of scholars in Sri Lanka as well as many other countries in the Asian region that supply female domestic workers overseas (for example, Shaw 2008a; Bryant 2005; Huang *et al.* 2005, 2003; Asis 2004b; Chammartin 2004a; Eki 2002; Gamburd 2000; Hugo 1994). Some scholars have shown that migration of women overseas can be a positive experience for migrants, their families and the countries of origin (UNFPA 2006; UNFPA and IOM 2006). For example, Gamburd (2000) found that Sri Lankan women have perceived migration as successful and

beneficial. In the opinion of the migrant women who Gamburd (2000) interviewed, migration has not only helped them to be more involved in the local and international labour market but also to change gendered roles and to improve women's economic position within and outside the family. Another group of scholars have argued that migrants and their families can experience both positive and negative impacts equally (UNFPA and IOM 2006). As Asis *et al.* (2004) explain the departure of women to overseas employment for years is seen to be problematic for the family members left behind, especially for their children. However, many of the studies in the Asian region (for example, Shaw 2008a; Huang *et al.* 2005, 2003; Hugo 2002) indicate mixed results of both positive and negative impacts. No one can expect the effects of migration on families to be simply either positive or negative because of a variety of factors that influence at the different stages of the migration process as reported earlier in Chapter 5.

Accordingly, the impacts of migration of Sri Lankan domestic workers overseas can be both positive and negative (Figure 8.1). Figure 8.1 shows that migration can have positive impacts on the family well-being when it helps to increase migrants' household income, savings and investments, build houses or improve the condition of the houses, buy lands or household consumer durables, reduce debt burden, and improve daily consumption. It can have negative impacts on the family economy if the period that the migrant worked abroad is short, the migrant had accumulated debts, the family members at home had misused migrants' remittances, migrants' husbands stopped working with the migration of their spouses, etc. Similarly, migration can have both positive and negative impacts socially (Figure 8.1). Social impacts can be positive, when there is an increasing involvement of women in decision making, especially in financial matters and household activities, improvement in the skills of the migrant, personal development, improvement in the social status of the family, improvement in children's education, and the changes in gender roles. Migration can have negative impacts on families if the marriages of the migrants are disrupted due to migration or they lose their recognition in the family or their children. The next section examines the economic impacts of migration, and thus, both positive and negative impacts will be discussed. The chapter then moves to a discussion of the social impacts focussing on both positive and negative impacts. Finally, it discusses the views expressed by the

respondents in relation to the government's proposal on restricting the migration of women with young children.

8.2 Economic impacts on families

Although women migrants make a significant economic contribution to their families and countries through remittances and destination countries by providing their labour (UNFPA and IOM 2006), there have been more arguments on the influence of migrant remittances on families (Kageyama 2008). Many migrant families use most of the remittances for daily household consumption rather than for savings and investments (Pham and Harrod 2008; Dias and Jayasundere 2004a; Gunatilleke and Perera 1995; Lim and Zlotnik 1992). However, the multiplier effects of remittances are considerable (Bryant 2005; Hugo 2002; Van Doorn n.d.) because remittances are not only used for daily needs of their families but also productive and non-productive investments, savings, and the education and health of their children (Parrenas 2005b; Wahyuni 2005; Battistella and Asis 2003; Eki 2003; Hugo 2003; Willie and Bassl 2001; Gamburd 2000; Zlotnik 1995). Hugo (2002) shows, Indonesian migrant families have been able to use remittances for basic support of their families and to invest in productive activities. Hadi (1999) explains that overseas migration has a significant positive impact on the economic well-being of Bangladesh families. This impact is more profound in raising living standards, buying land, and repaying debt. In general, remittances 'can raise families out of poverty and enable more expenditure in health care and education of the young in the household' (Ghosh 2009, p.32). Richard *et al.* (2005) show that migration overseas has a significant impact on poverty reduction in developing countries. Whether remittances are being used for the purposes of investment or consumption, they bring benefits to the households, communities, and countries that receive them, and their remittances contribute significantly to the development of migrant families (UNFPA and IOM 2006).

The main reason for migration is clearly the economic support of the family (Hugo and Ukwatta 2008), and thus many countries recognise the efforts of migrant women to sustain their families back home while contributing to the country's economy. Thus, the Philippines recognise the migrant workers as the 'country's heroes' (Asis 2004b, p.10), and the Sri Lankan Government recognises overseas remittances as the backbone of the country's economy (*Asian Migration News*, 31 August 2001 as cited in Hugo 2005b). However, it has become difficult to assess the impact of remittances on Sri Lankan households because of the

lack of comprehensive and accurate data, limited research on assessing the remittance impact on migrant households, the inaccuracy of reporting remittance transfers, and the use of informal channels for transferring money (Pham and Harrod 2008; Shaw 2008a).

8.2.1 Household income

For migrant families in this study, the most direct benefit from migration is the inflow of remittances and the rise in income as found in many studies in Asia (Sumulong and Zhai 2008; Hugo 2005c). In Indonesia, remittances have made an important contribution to the family income (Wahyuni 2005; Battistella and Asis 2003; Hugo 2002, 1995). Sri Lankan migrant women have economic hardships because of their unemployment before departure, low prestigious and low-income jobs of the migrants' husbands, and low monthly household income. In this study, almost three quarters of women (72.3 per cent) had not worked before migrating overseas. Dias and Jayasundere (2004a) also found that the majority of Sri Lankan women have not been employed prior to their migration. This suggests that the majority of them had not been directly contributing to the family income before their migration, and therefore, migration has offered them a chance to improve the economic circumstances of their family.

Since the majority of the migrant women in this study have not been employed before their migration, income of the husbands of migrants appears to be the major income of these migrant families. Questions related to the employment and income of the migrants' husbands were asked from all returned migrants. Family members were asked these questions only if the migrant was not divorced, widowed, or separated at the time of survey. Out of 348 migrant families who responded to these questions, only 7.1 per cent of them reported that their husbands were not employed at the time of their migration. As shown in Table 8.1, only about a fifth of them were employed in government, semi-government, or private sector. About 60 per cent of the families reported that migrants' husbands were employed as labourers. Out of them, 80 per cent reported that they were not employed as government, semi-government, or private sector employers indicating that they did not have regular work or fixed monthly incomes as the government, semi-government or private sector employers do. About 16 percent were engaged in self-employment activities, which included small-scale businesses, production activities, and cultivation. It is interesting that in 7.1 per cent of the families of the study, both husband and wife were employed abroad at the time of the survey. In those

families, both household and childcare activities are in the hands of extended family members. About 14 per cent worked as drivers, carpenters, masons, technicians, police constables, and bus conductors, and only 10 persons worked in clerical and other related fields suggesting the involvement of these men in the service sector is minimal.

Table 8.1 Number and percentage distribution of migrants' husbands who were employed at the time of the survey by employment category and status

Employment category	Employment status				Total	
	Government	Semi-government	Private	Other	Number	Percentage
Labourer	18	1	19	154	192	59.5
Self-employment	0	0	0	53	53	16.4
Works abroad	0	0	0	24	24	7.1
Driver	1	0	9	11	21	6.5
Carpenter/mason/painter/technician	0	1	6	13	20	6.4
Clerical and related	7	0	3	0	10	3.1
Police constable/bus conductor	1	0	0	2	3	0.9
Total	8.4 N=27	0.6 N=2	11.5 N=37	79.5 N=257	323	100.0

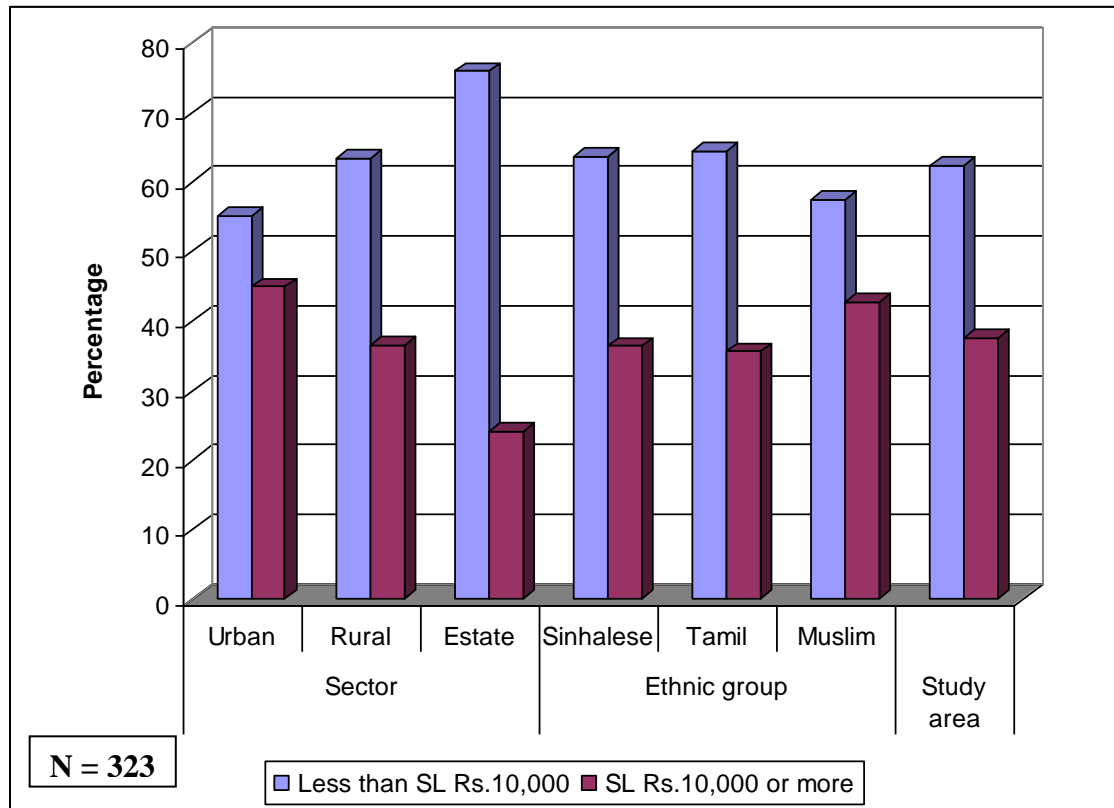
Source: 2008 female migration survey

Given that the majority were engaged in low status and low-income jobs, their average monthly income was about SL Rs.9,500 (approximately US \$84) with a median of SL Rs.8,000 (approximately US \$70). In 62.4 per cent of migrant families, migrants' husbands earned less than SL Rs.10,000 (approximately US \$88). Their monthly income is significantly lower than the mean monthly household income of Sri Lanka, which is SL Rs.26,286 (approximately US \$232) and the median, which is SL Rs.16,735 (approximately US \$147) in 2006/07 (DC&S 2008e, p.10). Therefore, migration has become one of the alternatives for many Sri Lankan women to improve their family income.

Income of the husbands of migrants, less than SL Rs.10,000 and SL Rs.10,000 or more, by sector and ethnic group is shown in Figure 8.2. Out of the 323 families who reported the

income of migrants' husbands, two thirds reported an income of less than SL Rs.10,000. A significant variation of their income was found between different sectors. The income distribution of rural households in the study is consistent to the pattern of the income distribution of rural households in Sri Lanka. However, the percentage of migrant families with husbands' income less than SL Rs.10,000 is higher in estate areas (about three quarters) and lower in urban areas (about 55 per cent) compared to families in rural areas (63.4 per cent). Estate areas are located far away from city centres, and have no easy access to public transportation facilities. Therefore, estate men are provided with limited opportunities to travel outside to find employment, and therefore, their work is mainly limited to the work in estates. Moreover, they get daily wages for the work in estates, according to a fixed rate decided by the estate authority. Unlike estate men, urban and rural men have no such restrictions in searching employment since many of the industrial and service centres are located in urban areas, and many agricultural activities are located in rural areas.

Figure 8.2 Income of the migrants' husbands by sector and ethnic group



Source: 2008 female migration survey

No significant difference was found in the percentage of migrants’ husbands who reported their income was less than SL Rs.10,000 between Sinhalese and Tamil families. However, a higher percentage of migrants’ husbands of Muslim families earned a monthly income of more than SL Rs.10,000. This is because more than half of the families, where the husbands of migrants’ worked abroad at the time of the survey are Muslims. Moreover, only one fifth of the Muslim migrant families reported that migrants’ husbands worked as labourers who earned an unstable monthly salary. Therefore, monthly income of migrants’ husbands of Muslim families tends to be higher than the families of Sinhalese and Tamils.

The fact that Sri Lankan domestic worker migrants come from low-income families is further reflected in the response to a question about the sufficiency of the household income to meet their needs before the migration of domestic workers. Table 8.2 shows, in only 7.5 per cent of cases (30 respondents), it was reported that the family’s income before migration was sufficient. Their average monthly income was SL Rs.10,283 (approximately US \$91) with a median of SL Rs.8,000 (approximately US \$70). The numbers who reported their monthly income was sufficient increased from 7.5 per cent (30 respondents) to 26.8 per cent (107 respondents) with migration. Consequently, their monthly average income has also increased from SL Rs.10,283 (approximately US \$91) to SL Rs.16454.21 (approximately US \$145) with the median income of SL Rs.15,000 (approximately US \$132). This is more or less consistent with the findings of the study of Save the Children (2006) which reported the average monthly income of the domestic worker migrant households as SL Rs.17,376 (approximately US \$153).

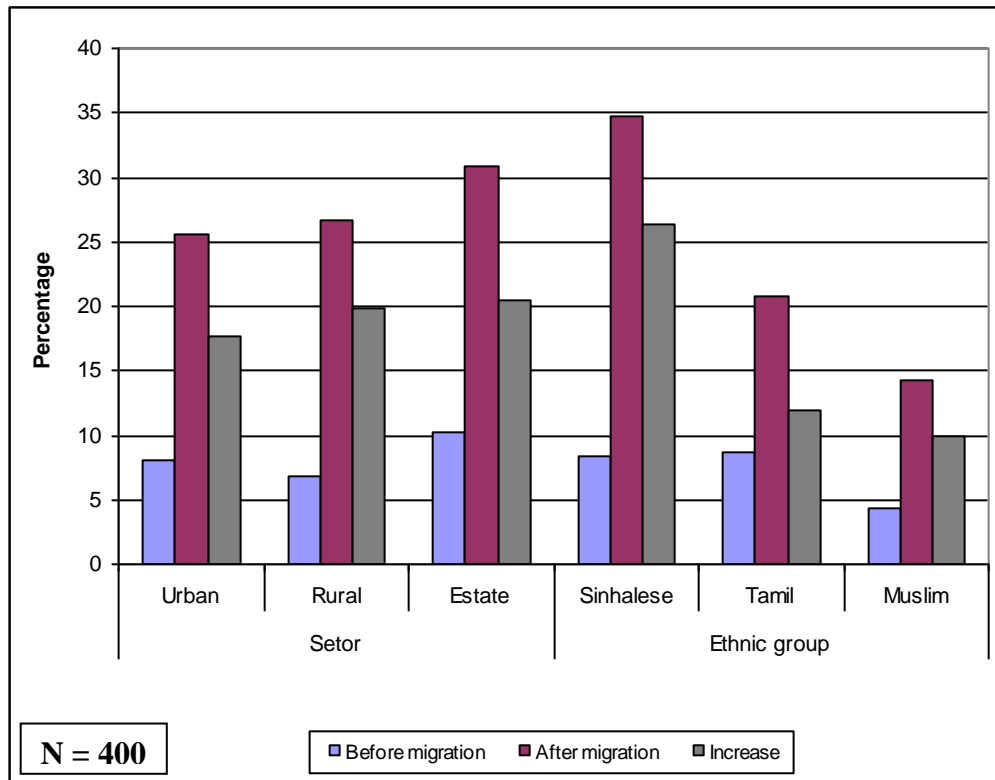
Table 8.2 Sufficiency of monthly household income before and after migration

Sufficiency of monthly household income	Before migration		After migration	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	30	7.5	107	26.8
No	370	92.5	293	73.3
Total	400	100.0	400	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

No significant variation was found between different sectors of migrant households who reported an increase in the sufficiency of their household income with migration (Figure 8.3). The increase is slightly lower in urban households than in rural and estate households. This is to be expected since the percentage of urban households with income of SL Rs.10,000 or more is higher than the households in rural and estate sectors. The increase is significant in Sinhalese households. Muslim families reported a low increase because the migrants' husbands in Muslim families have a higher monthly income than the income of Sinhalese and Tamils.

Figure 8.3 Sufficiency of monthly household income before and after migration by sector and ethnic group

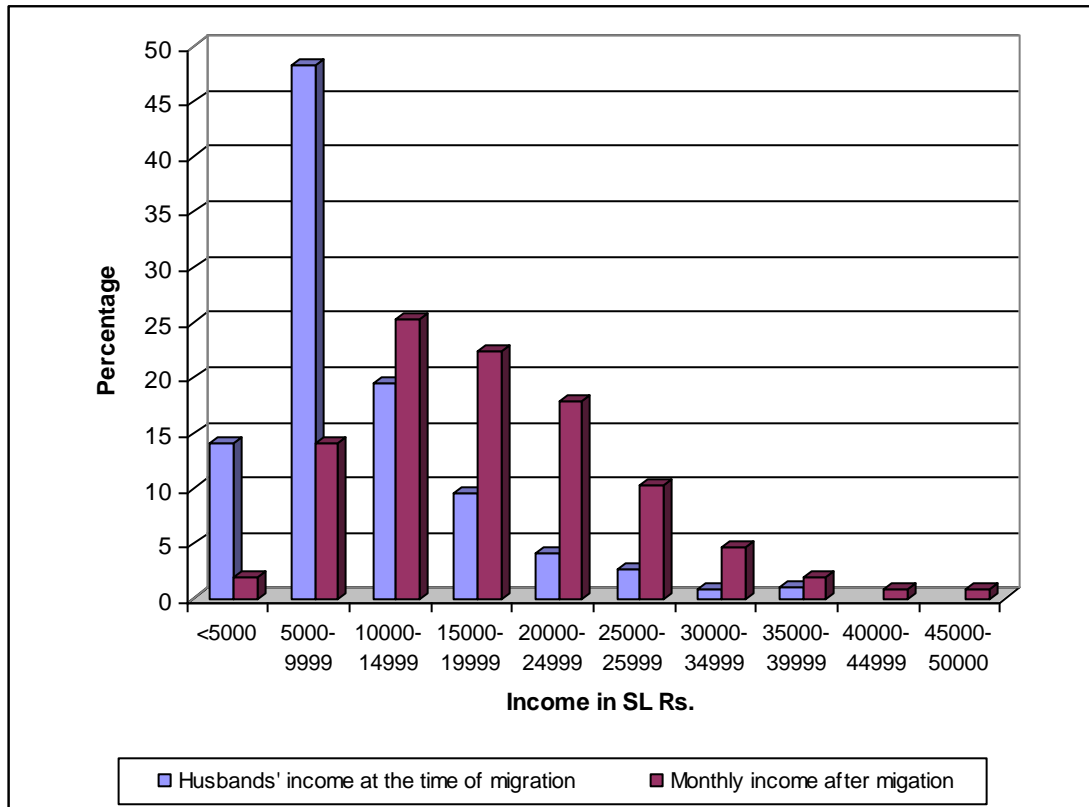


Source: 2008 female migration survey

Figure 8.4 compares the income of migrants' husbands at the time of their spouses' migration and the income of the household after migration. It shows that the percentage of households that reported their monthly household income was less than SL Rs.10,000 (approximately US \$88) has significantly decreased from 62.4 per cent to 15.9 per cent as a result of migration. Although their mean monthly household income has increased as a result of migration, it is yet

lower (SL Rs.16454.21, approximately US \$145) than the mean monthly household income of the country (SL Rs.26,286, approximately US \$232).

Figure 8.4 Income distribution of the respondent households whose monthly income was sufficient to support their families as a result of migration



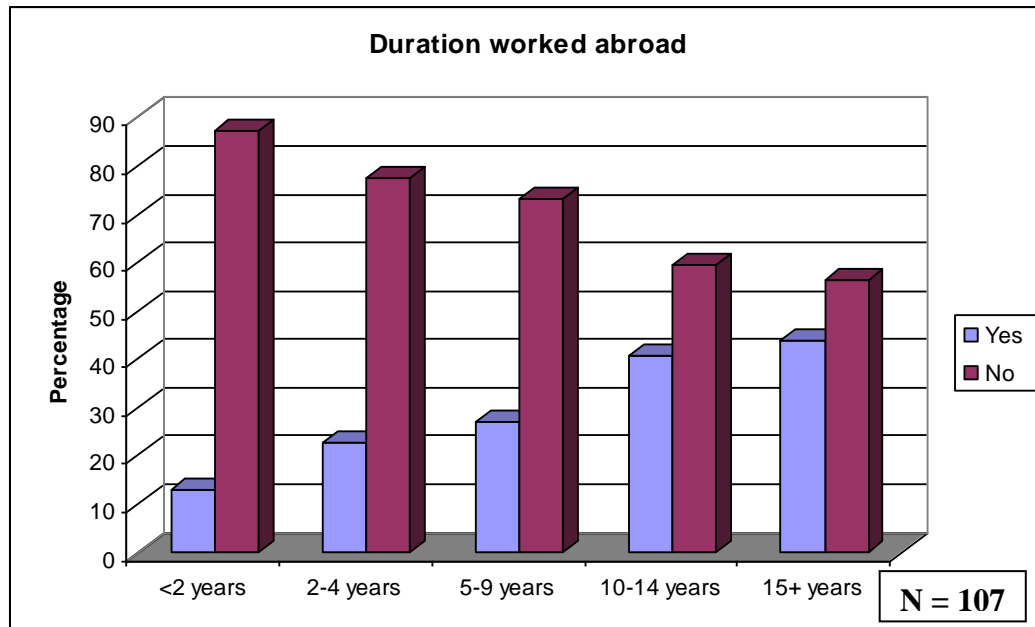
Source: 2008 female migration survey

There is a positive relationship between the percentages of families who reported that their monthly income was sufficient because of migration of women and the duration of work abroad as expected (Figure 8.5). A significant increase is observed when the duration increases to more than 10 years. These findings suggest that migrant women can get more economic benefits in relation to the increase in household income only if they can work more years abroad.

As found in this survey, the mean monthly salary of the domestic workers abroad is SL Rs.13,767 (approximately US \$121), and it is about three times higher than the salary of the migrant women who worked in Sri Lanka (US \$46) before migration. The average monthly

salary of domestic workers stipulated by the SLBFE has increased recently from US\$ 100 to US\$ 150. However, out of the total respondents, 53 family members interviewed reported that they did not know the salary of the migrant. The reported salaries of 347 respondents are shown in Table 8.3. Only 9 per cent of the migrants received a salary less than US \$100. While 58.5 per cent received a salary between SL Rs.10,000 to 15,000, one third received

Figure 8.5 Sufficiency of monthly household income by the duration of work abroad



Source: 2008 female migration survey

Table 8.3 Number and percentage distribution of migrants' monthly salary abroad

Monthly salary	Number	Percentage
< SL Rs. 10,000	31	8.9
SL Rs. 10,000 - 14,999	203	58.5
SL Rs. 15,000 - 19,999	78	22.5
SL Rs. 20,000 - 24,999	23	6.6
SL Rs. 25,000 and more	12	3.5
Total	347	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

more than SL Rs.15,000. These findings indicate that these migrant women are greatly benefited economically by their migration because many of the migrants did not work in Sri Lanka before their migration, and women who worked before their migration received a lower salary than what they earned abroad.

Women's ability to contribute to the monthly expenses of the household has increased as a result of migration (Table 8.4). Table 8.4 compares the main source of income for the monthly household expenses of migrant families who reported their monthly income was sufficient and not sufficient after migration. Money earned by the migrant woman is the main source of income for daily expenses for one fifth of the households for those who reported that their monthly household income was sufficient. However, it is only 1 per cent for households those who reported that their monthly household income was insufficient. In both these groups of households, migrants' husbands play a major role in household expenses. It is higher for the households who reported that income was sufficient than those reported it was not. These data indicate the main source of income, and therefore, it does not mean that other migrant women in the study do not provide economic benefits to their families. Without directly contributing to the monthly income, these women contribute to the family income through their savings and investments. It was reported that migrants support their families financially by not only working abroad but also by working in Sri Lanka after their return, since 22.1 per cent of the returned migrants had started to work in Sri Lanka after their migration. An important

Table 8.4 Main source of income to the monthly expenses of the households by those who reported their monthly income was sufficient and not sufficient

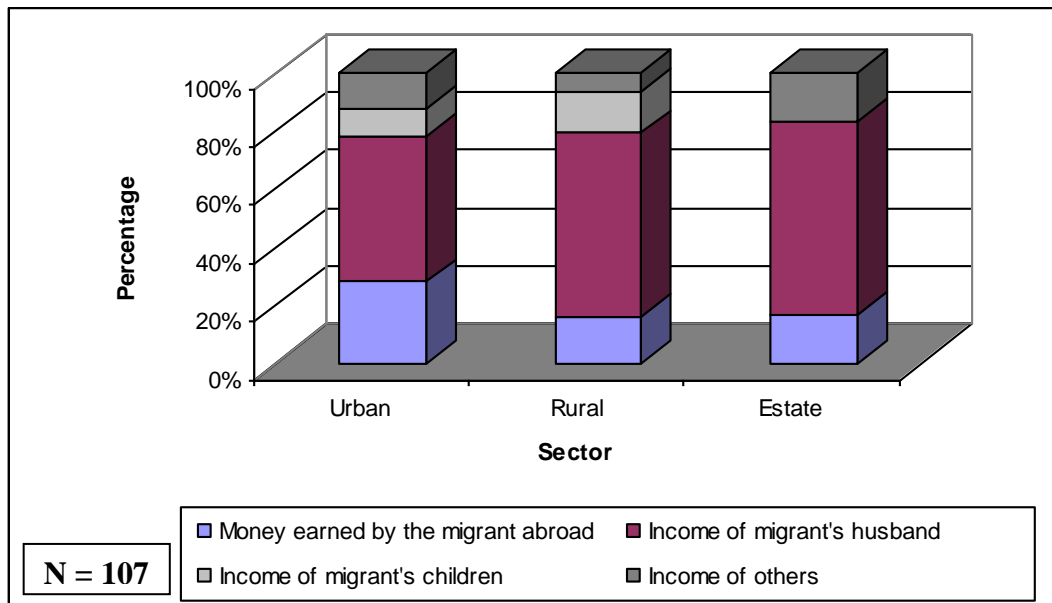
Income increase	Income was sufficient		Income was not sufficient	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Money earned by the migrant	21	19.6	3	1.0
Income of migrant's husband	64	59.8	182	62.2
Income of migrant's children	12	11.2	39	13.3
Income of family members	7	6.5	44	15.0
Migrant's salary in Sri Lanka	3	2.8	25	8.5
Total	107	100.0	293	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

finding was the economic dependence of children and other family members for household expenses has with the migration of women.

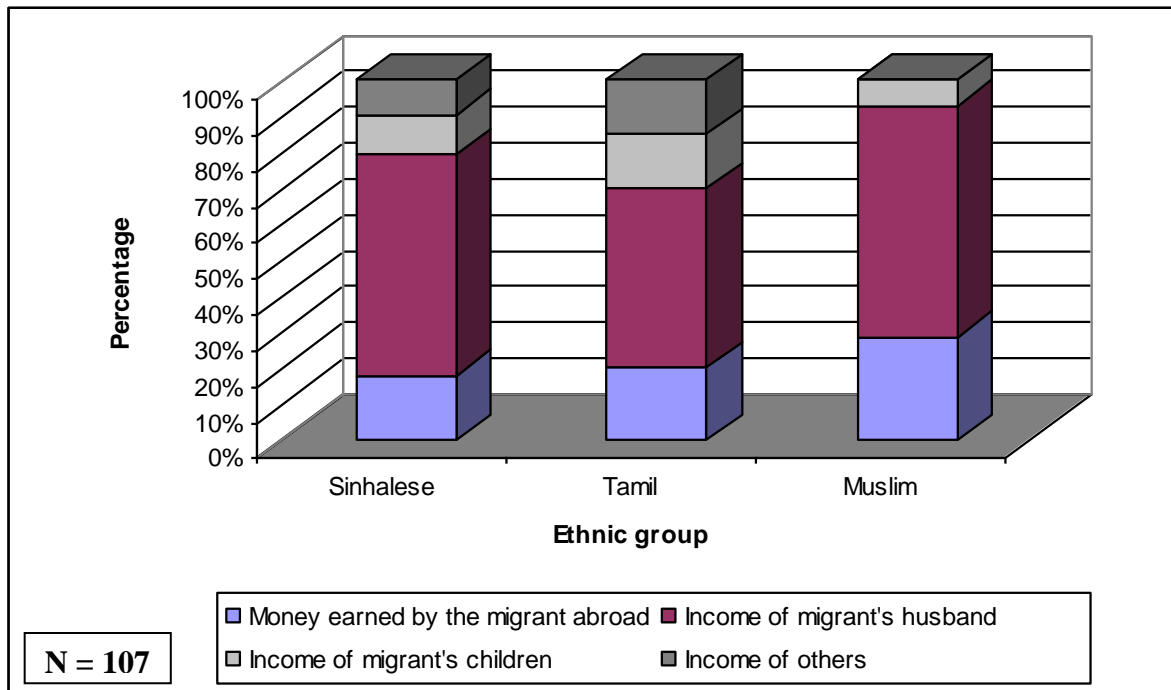
A variation in the contribution of migrants' earnings directly to the household income is evident between different sectors and different ethnic groups. The contribution is higher in urban areas than in rural and estate households (Figure 8.6). The higher contribution of migrant's earnings to the daily household expenses resulted in a lower contributions to investments in urban areas. Both rural and estate women have equally contributed to their monthly household income with their foreign earnings. Although there is no economic contribution from children to support estate families, their contribution is higher in rural areas. The economic contribution of other members such as parents and relatives are higher in both urban and estate households and it is lower in rural households.

Figure 8.6 Main source of monthly income of the household by sector



Source: 2008 female migration survey

The contribution of migrants' earnings as well as the earnings of their husbands to the household income is higher among Muslim migrant families because they did not receive economic support from their parents and relatives (Figure 8.7). Tamil migrant families have received more financial support from parents, relatives, and children than the families of Sinhalese and Muslims.

Figure 8.7 Main source of the monthly income of the household by ethnic group

Source: 2008 female migration survey

It is apparent that migrant women are generally successful in improving the economic situation of their families although little more than a quarter of the migrant families reported that monthly household income was sufficient after migration. More than three quarters (76.6 per cent) reported that the household income increased due to the migration of women (Table 8.5), and 36.8 percent of them reported that there had been a high or moderate increase. The reported increase in household income was higher when the respondents were the returned migrants. The highest percentage of families who reported that there was no increase in their household income as a result of migration was among Muslim families whereas lowest were Sinhalese families (Figure 8.8). A little less than a tenth of Sinhalese families and 6.5 per cent of the rural families reported a high increase of household income as a result of women's migration.

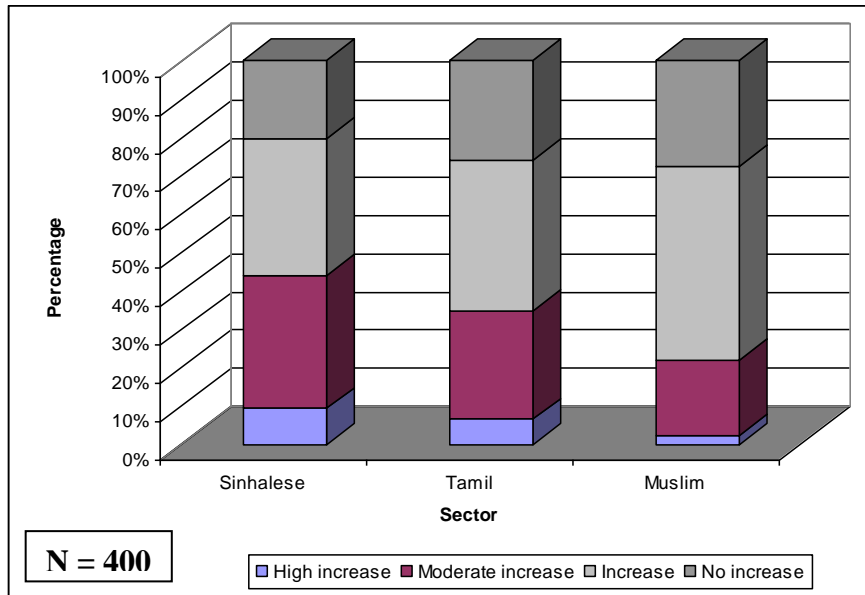
The increase in the household income is closely related to the duration of work abroad (Figure 8.9). The percentage reported as having a high increase in income rises with the increase in the duration of work abroad. As expected, opinion of those who stated that there is no increase in the income is higher in the households where the migrant worked for less than two years. As

Table 8.5 Household opinion of whether the household income increased due to migration

Income increase	Type of respondent (Percentage)		Total
	Returned migrants	Family members	
High increase	6.5	7.7	7.0
Moderate increase	33.6	25.1	29.8
Increase	38.2	41.5	39.8
No increase at all	21.7	25.7	23.5
Total	100.0 N=400	100.0 N=400	100.0 N=400

Source: 2008 female migration survey

Figure 8.8 Household opinion of the increase in household income by ethnic group



Source: 2008 female migration survey

reported earlier in Chapter 5, out of 217 returned migrants, 71 per cent had the problem of financing their migration. Except for nine respondents, all the others borrowed money, pawned jewellery, or mortgaged land. Therefore, within the first few months of first two years of their work abroad, they spent money on repaying their debts. This can hinder the economic

well-being of families during the early years of migration. Therefore, women often felt that they needed to migrate abroad as repeat migrants in order to improve the well-being of their families.

Figure 8.9 Household opinion of the increase in household income by the duration of work abroad



Source: 2008 female migration survey

8.2.2 Remitting behaviour

Migrant women remit money directly to their families or to a bank account in Sri Lanka. The majority of the migrant women (94.5 per cent) sent their full salary or a portion of it to their family members at home while they were away (Table 8.6). Only 5.5 per cent of women did not send money while they were abroad, but brought money when they came back to Sri Lanka. A variation in remitting behaviour exists between different sectors, marital status categories, and ethnic groups. The percentage of women who did not send money while abroad was higher among urban families, divorced women, and Tamil migrant families.

Migrants' husbands were the main recipients for 59 per cent of the families (Table 8.7) and the second highest (20.4 per cent) were parents. This indicates that parents also played a key role in financial matters in the household when the migrant was overseas. An equal proportion of families (10.1 per cent) reported that the children and the relatives lived in the household received money from the migrant for daily expenses. Few migrants sent money directly to

their bank accounts. In addition to cash remittances, migrants sent goods home or brought them back when they visited or on their return.

Table 8.6 Remittance transfers by sector, marital status, and ethnic group

Sector, marital status, and ethnic group	Remittance transfers					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Sector						
Urban	112	89.6	13	10.4	125	31.3
Rural	228	96.6	8	3.4	236	59.0
Estate	38	97.4	1	2.6	39	9.8
Marital status						
Married	285	94.4	17	5.6	302	75.5
Divorced	9	81.8	2	18.2	11	2.8
Widowed	50	98.0	1	2.0	51	12.8
Separated	34	94.4	2	5.6	36	9.0
Ethnic group						
Sinhalese	207	95.8	9	4.2	216	54.0
Tamil	85	92.4	7	7.6	92	23.0
Muslim	86	93.4	6	6.6	92	23.0
Total	378	94.5	22	5.5	400	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

Table 8.7 Number and percentage distribution of remittance recipients

Recipient	Number	Percentage
Migrant's husband	223	59.0
Migrant's parents	79	20.8
Migrant's children	38	10.1
Migrant's relatives	38	10.1
Total	378	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

Households were asked about why the husband was not a recipient if they did not send money to the husband (Table 8.8). The main reason given by them was that the migrant was divorced, widowed or separated (49 per cent), and 9 per cent of the households claimed that the husband worked abroad, the lack in knowledge of money management, and husband used money for alcoholism were for little more than a quarter of households. Shaw (2008a, p.14) also found that many men of migrant families are unfamiliar with household financial management and a large proportion of income was spent on alcohol, drugs, or gambling. Other reasons include husband's illness, the mother had agreed to take the responsibility of expenses, etc. (14.8 per cent). In weakening situations of migrants' husbands in financial matters, women gain autonomy and empowerment in the family. These findings indicate that in about 40 per cent of the households, financial responsibilities are in the hands of migrant women.

Table 8.8 Reason for not sending money to the migrants' husbands

Reason	Number	Percentage
Divorced	76	49.0
Husband works abroad	14	9.0
Misuse of money	27	17.4
Lack of knowledge in financial management	15	9.7
Other	23	14.8
Total	155	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

8.2.3 Living condition and household consumption

Migrant domestic workers' earnings overseas have helped to improve the living conditions of their families (Kottegoda 2006; Bryant 2005; Hugo 2002; Rodrigo 1995; Eelens and Schampers 1989). Responses to a question in this survey about the ownership of major items such as housing, land, and vehicles and consumer durables before migration and after migration are shown in Table 8.9. Migration has helped one fifth of the migrants to buy or build a house with their earnings abroad. Although 36.3 per cent of the migrants reported the main reason for their migration was to build a house, more than 50 per cent of them achieved their goal. About 70 per cent of the migrants had a house on their own before migration, and 23 per cent of them were able to upgrade their housing. As found in the study of Rajan (2003)

in India, one of the prioritised aspirations of Sri Lankan women is the improvement of housing quality. Thirteen per cent of the families reported that they were able to buy land after migration. Although the ownership of housing and land has improved as a result of migration, little more than a tenth of migrant domestic worker families still do not own land or a house.

Table 8.9 Ownership of major items before and after migration

Ownership	Percentage							
	House	Land	Vehicle	Washing machine	Radio	Refrigerator	Television	Computer
Had before migration and no improvement	46.5	73.5	0.5	0.3	45.8	2.5	26.8	0.0
Had before migration but now improved	23.0		1.0	0.3	15.8	3.8	10.8	0.0
Had after migration	20.0	13.0	7.0	4.3	25.8	22.5	44.8	1.0
Do not still own	10.5	14.0	91.5	95.3	12.8	71.3	17.8	99.0
Total	100.0 N=400	100.0 N=400	100.0 N=400	100.0 N=400	100.0 N=400	100.0 N=400	100.0 N=400	100.0 N=400

Source: 2008 female migration survey

Hugo (2005c, p.80) shows that many migrant women ‘bring back high cost goods when they return’ when examining the remitting behaviour of the Indonesian migrant domestic workers. Indian emigrants are accustomed to bring durable consumer goods home (Rajan 2003). Similarly, Sri Lankan migrant women also bring high cost goods when they return. Table 8.9 shows that a significant number of migrant families were able to purchase or upgrade major household consumer durables, in particular, televisions, radios, and refrigerators as a result of their migration. Little less than two thirds had a radio and about 38 per cent had a television before the migration. A quarter of families were able to buy a radio, and about 45 per cent were able to buy a television due to migration. However, there were families who still do not own a radio or a television. Moreover, 71.3 per cent of the families do not own a refrigerator,

95 per cent a washing machine and 99 per cent a computer. Only 7 per cent of the respondents indicated that they had purchased a vehicle after migration, 4.3 per cent had bought a washing machine, and only four households had bought a computer.

The opinion of respondents on economic impacts of migration on monetary conditions, housing, and living conditions are shown in Table 8.10. In each case, the proportion who reported a worsening of their situation is quite small. Some of the reasons for a worsening situation are as follows:

- Some migrants worked abroad only for two or less than two years and were not able to make savings at all;
- One migrant woman reported that some women did not get their salaries for months and had to come back to Sri Lanka without money;
- Many of the migrants had financed their migration by pawning jewellery and borrowing money from moneylenders. They had to repay debts in the first few months while they worked abroad; and
- There were some other families where the migrants' husbands spent money earned by their wives on alcohol, drugs, and on extra-marital unions as reported by the FGD participants.

Table 8.10 Household opinion of the impact of migration on the household

Level of impact	Impact		
	Monetary condition	Housing	Living condition
Large impact	7.3	24.3	9.0
Significant impact	55.3	39.8	59.8
Same	29.5	33.0	29.0
Worse	8.0	3.0	2.3
Total	100.0 N=400	100.0 N=400	100.0 N=400

Source: 2008 female migration survey

Therefore, some migrant families experience worsening situations due to migration instead of improving their family status. However, more than 60 per cent of the families reported that the monetary, housing, and living conditions of their households had improved. The significance of the monetary contribution of migrant women to the improvement in living standards is apparent especially in housing since a quarter indicated a large improvement in housing as a result of migration.

Migrant women mostly send remittances to their families back home and they use them for multiple purposes (Eversole 2006). These remittances are used:

primarily for consumption and to meet the basic needs of the households, and sometimes to pay back loans incurred when going abroad; and to a lesser extent are they used for investment (Eversole 2006, p.33).

In general, remittances help families to maintain or increase expenditure on basic consumption, housing, education, and small-business formation (Kageyama 2008; Lasagabaster et al., 2005). The pattern of the use of remittances in household consumption is discussed in several studies (for example, Shaw 2008a; Eversole 2006; Hugo 2005c). In Indonesia,

80 per cent of the remittances [of migrant women] was spent on consumption such as house building/improvement, paying of debts, schooling of children, and meeting the daily needs of the family (Hugo 2005c, p.80).

A question was asked from all respondents about the spending pattern of the money sent by the migrant. Table 8.11 shows that a significant proportion (78.8 per cent) spent money for daily consumption as has also been found in other studies of Shaw (2008a), Kottegoda (2006), and Eelens (1995) in Sri Lanka. This is because many migrant families have a low-income. Housing was the major concern for more than two thirds of the families. This includes not only buying or building houses but also improving housing condition. This is a great achievement of their migration as discussed in the previous section. Sri Lankan migrant women not only expect the material well-being of families but also to improve the quality of their children in terms of education and health. Although there are negative effects of migration on the education of children, women migrants always show an interest of their children's education. Nearly 60 per cent of the migrants spent their foreign earnings on

children's education. Moreover, about 30 per cent of the migrant families spent money on their children's health.

Table 8.11 How family members spent money sent by the migrant - multiple responses

Items of expenditure	Number	Percentage
Daily consumption	315	78.8
Housing	180	64.0
Education of children	235	58.7
Jewellery	126	44.8
Child health	122	30.5
Repay debts	143	35.7
Vehicle	16	5.7

Source: 2008 female migration survey

It is interesting that a considerable proportion (44.8 per cent) spent money on jewellery, as they believe it is a valuable asset to them. These families have low level of income, and therefore, they frequently pawn jewellery when they face financial hardships in daily expenses, in some instances, children's education, or in special occasions such as weddings, funerals, etc. As reported earlier (Table 5.2 of Chapter 5), some women in the study pawned their jewellery to finance their migration. About 2 per cent of the migrants reported the main reason for their migration to reduce their debt burden. Another 66.8 per cent of the migrants borrowed money before their migration. Therefore, little more than a third spent remittances on repaying debts. Spending money in buying a vehicle (5.7 per cent) is important because the migrant domestic worker families, generally, do not have the affordability of buying a vehicle because of their low income. Use of remittances mainly on daily consumption and the repayment of debts raise a question about the long-term financial stability of migrant families. Women migrate for a period of contract, and their families have low incomes. Unless they use their hard earned money for income generating activities, economic benefits of their migration can be short-term. A considerable proportion of migrants' money is used for daily expenses and for repaying debts. However, these findings indicate that remittances sent by Sri Lankan migrant workers from abroad have contributed to improve the economic problems of their families to a certain extent.

8.2.4 Investments and savings

Migrant workers' earnings are also spent in investments and on savings (Kageyama 2008; Hugo 2005c; Rodrigo 1995). Of the total migrant families in the study, 70.3 per cent reported that they invested migrants' earnings in both productive and non-productive items. These productive investments include land and setting up a business and non-productive activities includes housing, vehicle, jewellery, and household items. Three quarters of families who invested in family development are in rural areas (Table 8.12) and they invested mainly in housing. Dwellings of migrant families in estates are line rooms that belong to estates. Some

Table 8.12 Investments by sector, marital status, and ethnic group

Sector, marital status, and ethnic group	Investments					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Sector						
Urban	77	61.6	48	38.4	125	100.0
Rural	178	75.4	58	24.6	236	100.0
Estate	26	66.7	13	33.3	39	100.0
Ethnic group						
Sinhalese	161	74.5	55	25.5	216	100.0
Tamil	55	59.8	37	40.2	92	100.0
Muslim	65	70.7	27	29.3	92	100.0
Duration of work abroad						
Less than 2 years	7	22.6	24	77.4	31	100.0
2-4 years	104	63.4	60	36.6	164	100.0
5-9 years	107	82.3	23	17.9	130	100.0
10-14 years	50	84.7	9	15.3	59	100.0
15 years and over	13	81.3	3	18.7	16	100.0
Total	281	70.3	119	29.7	400	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

of the urban migrant families in Kurunegala district lived in houses provided by the government. Therefore, the families living in line rooms and government housing did not have permission to renovate or extend their houses. However, the availability of lands in rural areas has provided more opportunities for rural migrant families to build houses, and therefore, rural families have invested more in housing than migrant families in other areas. Three quarters of the families who did investment are Sinhalese. A positive relationship was found between the duration of work abroad and the percentage of families that invested migrants' earnings on productive and non-productive items.

Of the total migrant families in the study, only 21.6 per cent of them were able to invest in a productive activity. Of them, 3.9 per cent spent to set up a business and 16.7 per cent invested in land. It is consistent with the findings of Hugo (2005c, p.80) who reported that only 20 per cent of the remittances of Indonesian migrant women were spent on investments such as land and setting up small businesses. Low investment in productive activities indicates that the benefits of their migration are short-term. Eelens (1995) shows that Sri Lankan households having a large number of dependents were less likely to save and migrants were more likely to save while abroad, than their relatives back home. Rodrigo (1995) reports that the savings of the migrants and their family members are insignificant as they are from low-income families and most of the expenses of their migration journey are met through borrowing money at high interest loans.

However, little more than a fifth of the migrant families reported that they saved some money (Table 8.13). In contrast to the pattern of investment, estate families were able to save money more than the families in urban and rural areas. Among the different ethnic groups, both Tamils and Sinhalese saved more money than Muslim migrant families. These findings indicate that estate families, where the majority are Tamils, have more inclination towards saving money, as they have limited scope in investing or in setting up a business since they are mostly confined to work in the estate. However, there is no significant variation in the pattern of savings by the duration of work.

A question about the sufficiency of their savings for their family development was asked from the respondents who reported that they saved money. About 72 per cent had the opinion that their savings of migrant's remittances were sufficient (Table 8.14). Little more than a fourth

Table 8.13 Whether migrant families were able to save money by sector, marital status, and ethnic group

Sector, marital status, and ethnic group	Saving money					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Sector						
Urban	29	24.6	89	75.4	118	100.0
Rural	45	19.7	184	80.3	229	100.0
Estate	11	28.9	27	71.1	38	100.0
Ethnic group						
Sinhalese	49	23.6	159	76.4	208	100.0
Tamil	21	24.1	66	75.9	87	100.0
Muslim	15	15.7	75	84.3	90	100.0
Duration of work abroad						
Less than 2 years	5	18.5	22	81.5	27	100.0
2-4 years	40	25.5	117	74.5	157	100.0
5-9 years	23	18.0	105	82.0	128	100.0
10-14 years	14	24.1	44	75.9	58	100.0
15 years and over	3	20.0	12	80.0	15	100.0
Total	85	22.1	300	77.9	385	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

Table 8.14 Respondent opinion about the adequacy of their savings

Opinion about savings	Number	Percentage
More than enough	1	1.2
Enough	23	27.1
Not enough	61	71.8
Total	85	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

reported that the money they saved was enough and only one respondent said that their savings are more than enough.

Although migrant families in this study reported that remittances have been invested in both productive and non-productive items, their investments have not always been used for the long-term economic development of the family since the number of families who invested in income generating businesses were small. It was found that a major portion of remittances was used for daily consumption. According to the opinion of FGD participants, mismanagement of household finances by the recipients of remittances while the migrant was abroad was one of the main obstacles to their economic improvement. As Shaw (2008a) reports, many of the Sri Lankan domestic workers found, on their arrival, that money they sent home had been used for a purpose not sanctioned by the migrant. FGD participants of this study also expressed similar views. According to them, some of the husbands of migrant women used money sent by the migrant on alcohol and drugs. In many instances, family members as well as the returned migrants travelled by taxis instead of using public transport. As a result, asset-building process takes several years with repeat migrations although remittances have generated significant improvements in well-being of many migrant families (Shaw 2008a). As Shaw (2008a) explains, without supplementary local income sources and their low family income at home, remittances are insufficient for savings and investments. However, making migrant workers and their family members aware of the importance of using of remittances in income generating activities is vital. It will help the migrants to gain long-term improvements in their living standards.

8.3 Social impacts of migration

Women migrants bring not only economic remittances but also social remittances to their families and the community (Abella 2005; Hugo 2003; Clawen 2002). Social remittances that influence women and their families can be identified in several ways. Firstly, many women migrant families experience changes in consumption patterns, values and attitudes, modes of bringing up children, clothing, and even food preferences (Abella 2005). As UN (2005, p.62) researchers argue that the changes of outer appearance and behaviour of migrants reflect ‘the changes associated with modernity and autonomy offered by the environment in destinations’. Secondly, it can have a positive influence on gender norms in the country of origin as well (UNFPA 2006; Piper 2005). Thirdly, migration ‘enhances the autonomy and power of women’

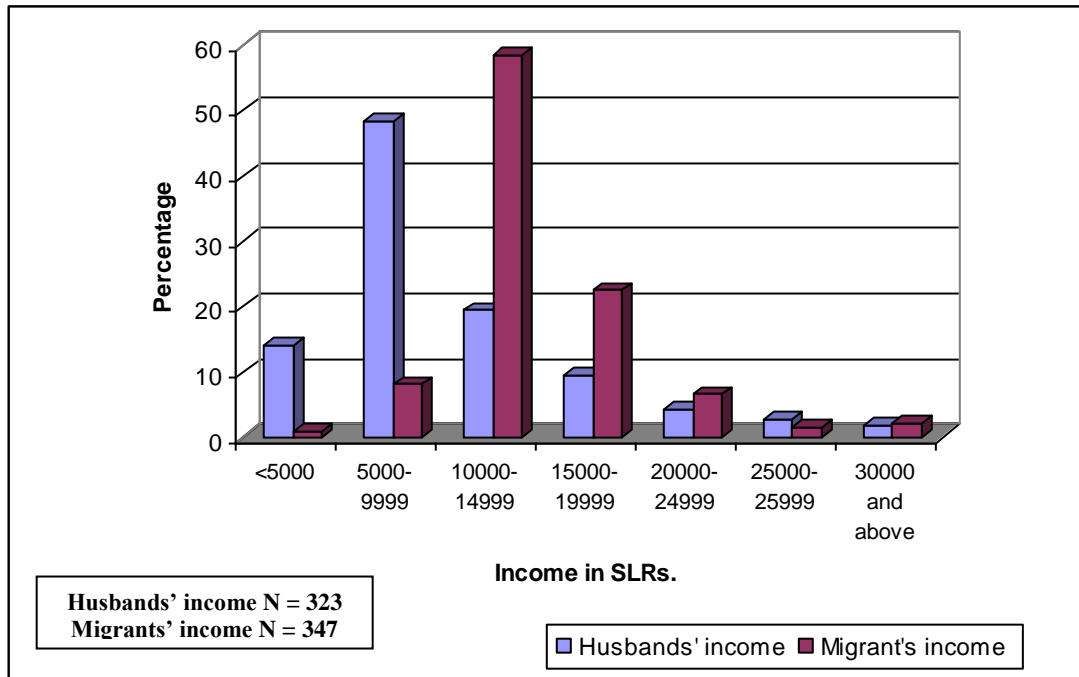
since ‘they become familiar with norms regarding women’s rights and opportunities’ (UN 2005, p.62). It ‘can be empowering in terms of higher self-esteem, and increased economic independence of migrant workers’ (Chammartin 2004a, p.8). Fourthly, it changes gender roles of family members (Ghosh 2009; De Silva 2006; UN 2005; Hugo 2002). Finally, the migration of women influences the structure of families and family functioning (Wahyuni 2005). As UNFPA and IOM (2006) argue, women migrants are the physical and emotional supporters of their families, and therefore, their separation from the family for a long period can create negative effects on their families (UNFPA and IOM 2006).

8.3.1 Changes in gender roles

An important impact of the absence of women on families is the changes in gender roles (Ghosh 2009; De Silva 2006; Parrenas 2005a, 2005b, 2001a). Migration of women has challenged their gender ideology as they are involved in three-tier activities simultaneously (Ghosh 2009, p.26). Firstly, they have to perform household and care activities for the family of their employers. Secondly, they mother their children from afar without abandoning them. Thirdly, women become the breadwinners, contributing significantly to the economic sustenance of their families. Their role as a breadwinner is a major aspect of their migration (Fresnoza-Flot 2009; Asis 2004b).

Little more than a quarter of women in the study had contributed to the family’s income before their migration overseas, and little more than a fifth of the returned migrants (48 women) contributed by working upon their return. Out of the returned migrants who started to work upon their return, more than three quarters engaged in self-employment, which includes food processing and sewing. These findings indicate that about a quarter of women financially support their families in addition to their nurturing task. Their economic contribution was significantly higher during the period they worked abroad in comparison to their husbands’ income as shown in Figure 8.10. The mean monthly income of migrants is SL Rs.13,766 (approximately US \$122) with a median of SL Rs.13,000 (approximately US \$114), and it is higher than the income of their husbands’ (approximately US \$84). The general opinion of the returned migrants interviewed was their willingness to start income generating activities in Sri Lanka without going abroad again with the support of government and non-governmental organisations or community leaders.

Figure 8.10 Monthly income distribution of migrants while working overseas and their husbands at home



Source: 2008 female migration survey

In the absence of men, families do well since women adjust well taking the whole responsibility of household chores including childcare (Asis 2005b; 2004b), and the involvement of other family members in household management is low since the mother is the most responsible person in household management (Battistella Conaco 1998). The situation is different when women migrate. Migrant women challenge their 'traditional roles and power hierarchies' (Pham Harrod 2008, p.51) with their enhancing ability to earn. In their absence, spouses assume certain roles and responsibilities in addition to their role as a breadwinner of the family (Ghosh 2009; UNFPA and IOM 2006; Parrenas 2005b; Asis 2004a; Asis *et al.* 2004; Huang *et al.* 2003; Battistella Conaco 1998; Zlotnik 1995). However, not all the men who are left behind take responsibilities of household activities and childcare (Asis 2005b; 2004b) since they are involved in income earning activities outside home. In such situations, they depend on other extended family members, especially females, in household and childcare activities (Asis 2005b). UN (2005, p.62) also highlights the difference between men and women in adjusting to the situation on return:

In Asia, when men migrate, leaving their families behind, there appears to be evidence that the women-headed households adjust rapidly to the situation. Women continue their usual activities, but they also take on new roles in the absence of their spouses. Men retain their role as breadwinner, albeit at a distance. Little information is available on the reintegration process when men return, but experts speculate that tensions are likely to arise as women and children adjust to their presence. By contrast, women's migration results in more profound changes in family relationships. Men do not necessarily take up new domestic roles although some become full-time caregivers. They often continue to work for pay outside the home. Grandmothers, older daughters or other family members typically assume responsibility for childcare and other household activities.

In this study, it was found that in more than half of the migrant families, fathers assumed new roles as caregivers of their children as explained in Chapter 7. In addition, extended family members who lived in the household before their migration and those who moved into the household with the migration of women help in household activities and childcare work since these families did not hire domestic helpers. In general, men do not give up their jobs in the absence of their spouses overseas although there were some cases of husbands who gave up their jobs as reported by the FGD participants. Therefore, they had to assume more responsibilities than women left behind by migrant men. Ghosh (2009) argues that the wage differentials of migrant women in labour sending and receiving countries allow migrant families at the origin to employ a female worker from another low-income family for childcare and other household activities in the absence of migrant women. However, this is not the case in Sri Lanka since only one family reported that they employed a domestic helper in the absence of the migrant women. The study of Save the Children (2006) in Sri Lanka also found that many fathers in families of migrant mothers assumed new roles involving domestic and childcare activities.

Changes in the decision making power of women is another important aspect of migration. In relation to the household decisions in Sri Lanka, men are empowered with greater responsibilities than women as Kottegoda (2006, p.52) explains:

The father is empowered with greater role and responsibility than the mother, and women as the head of the household is recognised only in situations where the spouse is unable to maintain himself or when she has become a widow according to different laws in Sri Lanka.

It is because husbands are considered to be the primary income earners and the wife is a dependent. This perception has transformed with the increasing participation of women in

internal and international labour market. Consequently, women became the principal breadwinner during the period that they worked abroad. However, in the case of female international migrants, especially the unskilled workers, as Kottegoda (2006, p.61) explains:

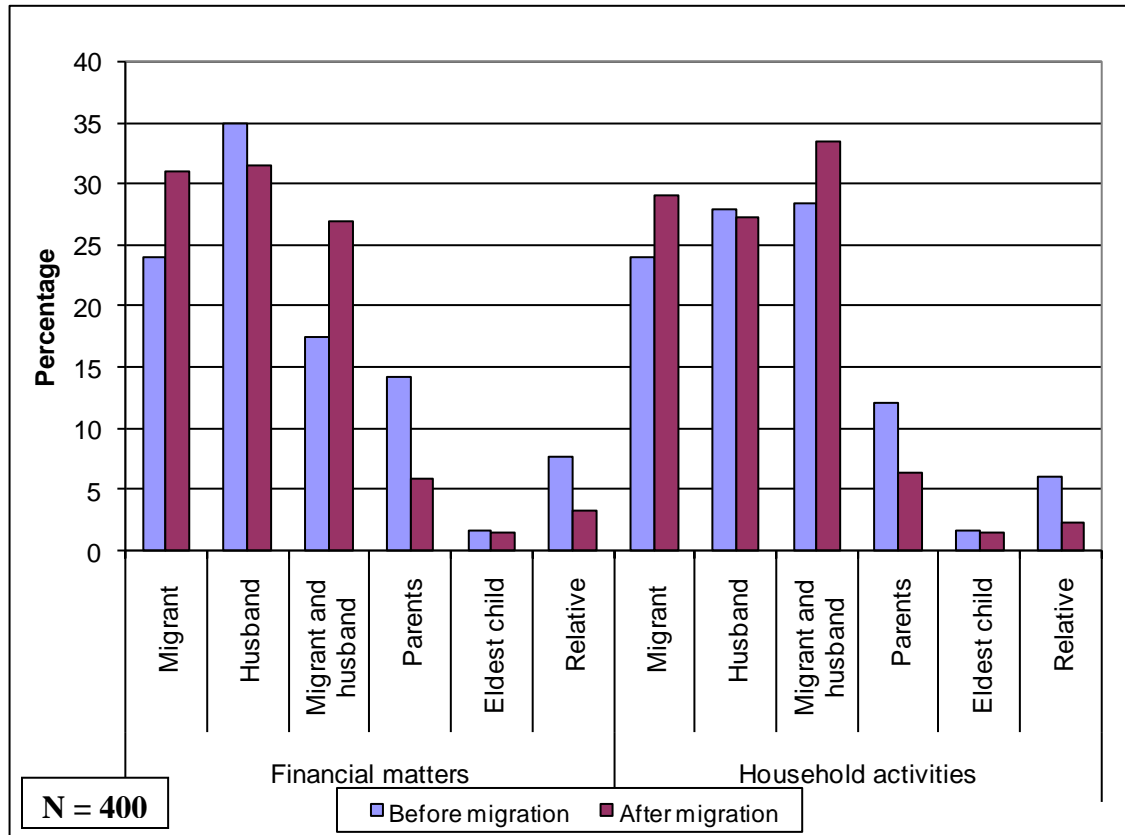
there appears to be strong resistance to recognising women as the primary income earner and main source of support in the migrant's household.

Although these migrant women have earned a higher salary than their husbands during the period they worked abroad, their mean duration of work abroad is only 5.7 years. In addition, many of these migrant women have not been employed before migration and upon return. Therefore, husbands are regarded as the principal wage earners of migrant domestic worker families as they earn money for most of their lifetime. Consequently, women are repeatedly classified as primary caregivers or housewives but not as primary wage earners. Most of the female migrants who return home have to take over the position of housewife and thus their role as a primary wage earner is temporary and limited to the duration of their stay abroad. This is consistent with the findings of Gunatilleke's study (1992).

The increasing participation of women in the international labour market has resulted in an increase in the involvement of Sri Lankan women in decision making, on both financial matters and household activities, as shown in Figure 8.11. Not only the percentage of women who take the decision alone has increased but also the percentage that takes joint decisions, which includes migrant and her husband, has increased. This increase is more significant in financial matters than in household activities. The increase in the joint decisions of both the migrant and her husband in financial matters are more noticeable than the increase in the percentage of women who take the decision alone. The increase in the decision making power of migrant women has resulted in a slight reduction of the absolute decision making power of the husbands and a significant reduction in the decision making power of parents and relations.

Sri Lankan women migrate as domestic workers overseas for a shorter period of contract. Therefore, as Fresnoza-Flot (2009) indicates, their spouses may perceive new roles they are assigned as temporary. Moreover, most of these women take all the responsibilities of the household and childcare work on their return since many of them are not employed after their migration.

Figure 8.11 Changes in the decision making power of migrant women in financial matters and household activities as a result of migration



Source: 2008 female migration survey

8.3.2 Skills acquired

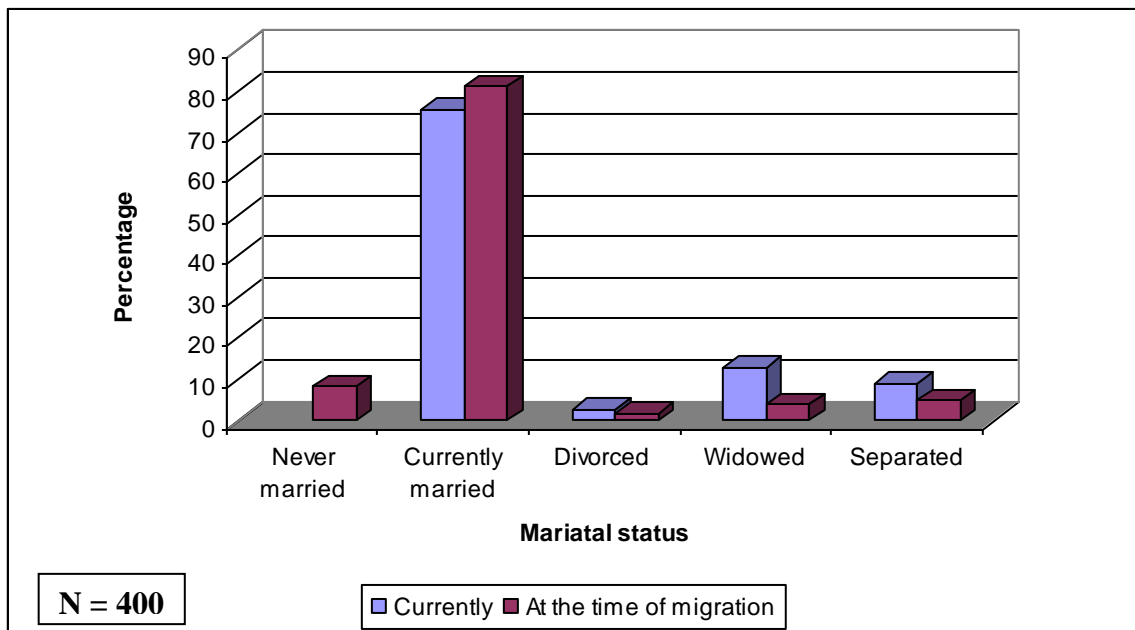
While the family members adjust to their new roles in the absence of migrant women, migrant women adjust to new societies and families since they are empowered with new perspectives, economic and decision-making powers, and new skills (UNFPA and IOM 2006). Females acquire not only economic independence through their migration but also some other skills (Pham Harrod 2008; Jolly and Reeves 2005). In the opinion of respondents in the study, 85 per cent of the migrants acquired new skills because of migration. An ability to speak a foreign language, proper management of household activities, knowledge in use of electrical appliances, and to do any work outside home are some of them. Out of the returned migrants in the sample, 40.8 per cent stated that they had achieved some personal development due to migration. FGD participants also had a similar opinion. According to them, migrant women, in general, engage in more social work after their migration because of the communication skills

they acquired through their migration. As reported by a medical doctor in the discussion, migrant women have a greater ability to discuss health matters than non-migrant women.

8.3.3 Marital stability

Migration of women overseas for several years tends to impact also on the stability of their marriages (Dias and Jayasundere 2004b; Hugo 2002; Eelens 1995; Zlotnik 1995). Figure 8.12 shows the marital status of the migrants at the time of initial migration and at the time of the survey. The proportion divorced, separated, or widowed increased from 10.6 to 24.6 percent although the biggest increase was found in the number widowed indicating the effect of the passing time on the sample. Of those who were divorced or separated after migration, almost all indicated that migration played a role in marital disruption. Husband's alcoholism and extra marital unions of both migrants and their husbands are the reasons given by the FGD participants for the incidence of marital disruption. However, marital disruption can also be found among male migrant families and non-migrant families, which needs further investigation. As Gamburd (2000) found, the waste of women's hard-earned money by their husbands led to marriage break-ups. The study of Eelens (1995) shows that the proportions of

Figure 8.12 Marital status of migrant women - at the time of initial migration and at the time of the survey



Source: 2008 female migration survey

divorced or separated were several times greater among women migrant families than found among the non-migrant families. Hugo (2002) shows that there is a higher incidence of marriage break-ups among Indonesian women who migrate as domestic workers.

The negative impacts of migration other than the marital break-ups were asked from the respondents in this study and the multiple responses given to the question are shown in Table 8.15. As reported in Chapter 7, the migration of mothers negatively influenced their children's education in 17 per cent of the families. Among the negative effects on husbands' alcoholism, drug addiction and gambling are relevant in a little less than a quarter of these families faced this problem in the absence of migrant women. This can hinder the economic and social progress of their families. The situation will worsen if there are no other extended family members in the household to take care of children and other household activities. Misbehaviour of children and the ill health of children are also some of the problems for these families since about one tenth of them reported such cases. Misbehaviour includes drug addiction and alcoholism. Although the reason for migration is economic, some families reported the worsening economic situations in their families.

**Table 8.15 Negative impacts of migration on families
- multiple responses**

Negative impacts	Number	Percentage
Discontinuation of children's education	68	17.0
Husband's alcoholism	65	16.3
Husband's drug addiction and gambling	27	6.8
Misbehaviour of children	21	5.3
Ill health of children	19	4.8
Indebtedness	13	3.3

Source: 2008 female migration survey

The participants of focus groups also reported their opinions about the negative effects of women's migration on families shown below:

- Migrant women have the perception that they do not have recognition in the society. This is because of the publicity given by the media, especially the newspapers, about the sexual harassments some women face abroad. In some

situations, women are recognised as prostitutes and therefore, their children also do not have recognition in the society;

- There were reported cases of babies born to these women abroad. The fathers of these babies were the Sri Lankan men living in the countries where the migrant women worked or their employers;
- Some of the husbands of these women were used to take alcohol to get rid of their loneliness due to the absence of their wives for a long period. Consequently, some men had extramarital unions;
- There were some reported cases of early marriages of the daughters of migrant women. In many of these situations, their marriages were unsuccessful. This had led to the migration of a second generation of women;
- There were possibilities of having hypertension and diabetes because of the heavy workload women had in the country of destination and emotional strains of the separation from their family members;
- With the higher involvement of migrant women in decision making in the family and the decrease in the absolute power of men as breadwinners can also create problems in the family;
- Some families had worsening economic situations of their families because some of the women had to face problems such as sexual abuse, heavy workload, physical abuse, imprisonment, and illnesses and therefore, husbands or other relatives tried to bring them back. For that reason, they had to sell their property or to get loans for higher rates of interest, and as a result the economic situation of their families worsened;
- The separation of women from their spouses for a long period has resulted in family breakdowns;
- There were some reported cases of men who lost their lives due to drug addiction as a result of spouse's migration; and
- Spouses of many male prisoners of Colombo D. S. Division are migrants

Although there are reported cases of negative impacts of migration because of the economic needs of these migrant families, women continue to migrate.

8.4 Respondents' views on female migration overseas

The opinion of the respondents regarding the migration of women was found to be important in suggesting policy options. A little more than half of them (208 respondents) reported that they recommend women to work overseas. Reasons for their recommendations are mainly economic (Table 8.16). More than half of the respondents had the perceptions that migration of women helps to alleviate poverty of their families. Equal proportions of migrants (about one fifth) recommended women's migration because migrant women can earn a higher salary abroad as well as they can use money for the development of their families.

Table 8.16 Reasons for recommending women to work overseas

Reasons	Number	Percentage
To have a relief from poverty	113	54.3
Development of the family	42	20.2
Higher salaries abroad	42	20.2
No jobs in Sri Lanka	11	5.3
Total	208	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

Reasons for not recommending females to work overseas are shown in Table 8.17. Nearly 40 percent of the respondents had the opinion that females have to suffer both physically and emotionally when they work abroad. Equal proportions of the respondents (18.8 per cent) had

Table 8.17 Reasons for not recommending females to migrate

Reasons	Number	Percentage
Have to suffer when working abroad	75	39.1
Social costs outweigh economic benefits	36	18.8
Discontinuation of children's education	36	18.8
Problems of the family left behind	26	13.5
Burden for family members in child care	8	4.2
No development of the family	7	3.6
Women face sexual abuse abroad	4	2.1
Total	192	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

the opinion that social costs of migration outweigh economic benefits and migration affects the discontinuation of children's education. While 13.5 per cent had the opinion that families left behind face problems in the absence of women, and another 4.2 per cent stated that family members have to take the additional burden of childcare. A small proportion of respondents (3.6 per cent) reported that migration would not help the development of the family. Sexual abuse of women abroad was also a concern of a small number of respondents (2.1 per cent).

Out of 400 respondents, 56.3 per cent (225 respondents) were aware of the government's proposal on restricting the migration of women with young children. Out of them, 81.9 percent reported that they support the government's decision. This indicates that even if women migrate overseas because of their financial difficulties, they prefer them to stay at home rather than going abroad to earn money because of the social costs involved in their migration. The suggestions made by the returned migrants for and against female migration are shown in Table 8.18. Nearly one tenth of the returned migrants strongly recommended that female migration should not be banned. In contrast, another 5 per cent reported that females should not be allowed to migrate. About 42 per cent of the returned migrants had proposed an increase in the job opportunities in Sri Lanka. This indicates that they prefer to stay in Sri Lanka rather than going abroad if they can find a job in Sri Lanka. Many of them prefer to engage in self-employment activities. About a quarter of the migrants reported that they would prefer if their spouses get a chance to go abroad for work.

Table 8.18 Suggestions of respondents on female migration

Reasons	Number	Percentage
Increase job opportunities for women in Sri Lanka	90	41.5
Send more males abroad	56	25.8
Provide subsidies for poor people	23	10.6
Do not ban female migration	22	10.1
Provide child care facilities	10	4.6
Do not allow women to migrate	10	4.6
Allow unmarried women and married women with old children to migrate	6	2.8
Total	217	100.0

Source: 2008 female migration survey

Participants of the FGD discussions also had the views, both for and against, the government proposal of restricting women's migration overseas for employment. If these women continue migrating, they suggested the following to be put forward for the attention of the government and community:

- Initiation of programmes to develop the family economy and to encourage them to compulsory savings;
- Make both migrants and husbands aware of better money management;
- Provision of loans at low interest rates (less than 10 per cent); otherwise, migrants have to pay higher interest to their money lenders during the first few years they work abroad;
- Take action to those who violate rules and regulations at the time of pre-departure and at destination;
- Initiate discussions with families about childcare arrangements and follow them up;
- Not to allow women to provide false documents such as marriage, birth, and educational certificates;
- Appoint government or non-governmental officials to help migrant families in critical situations and monitor their progress;
- Make arrangements to cancel the licenses of agencies that cheat migrants;
- Initiate programmes to educate women in money management not only before migration but also after migration;
- Encourage women to contact SLBFE directly without going to illegal agencies as some women go to illegal agencies because of ignorance and easiness;
- Initiate programmes to integrate migrant women into productive economic activities upon return; and
- Initiate counselling programmes upon return.

Some of the FGD participants had the view that females should not be allowed to migrate and their suggestions are as follows:

- Provide self-employment opportunities for both men and women;
- Send more males abroad, but some suggested not to send married persons as its negative impacts on families and children irrespective of sex;
- Send unmarried women or those without children;
- Develop the skills of children in accordance with the requirement of the demand for labour overseas; and
- Make arrangements to send skilled workers abroad rather than unskilled workers. In this case, there is a need to introduce more vocational training programmes for the youth.

A medical doctor who participated in the discussion strongly recommended not to allow mothers with children of age less than 5 years of age to migrate as it is the period that these children need their mother's affection and protection. As he pointed out many of the children of migrant women are backward and lack nutrition. The findings of the study indicate that these migrant women have financial difficulties, and they are aware of the social costs of migration. Since these women believe that there is no other way for them to earn money, they prefer to migrate with the purpose of providing economic support for the family.

8.5 Conclusion

Women's contribution to the total foreign earnings in Sri Lanka in the garment industry, private remittances, and plantation crops are remarkable. The growth of private remittances, which includes the earnings of domestic workers, is faster than the growth of earnings from plantation crops and garment industry. Moreover, female migrant remittances are the main source of family income during the period that they work abroad. This study found that the reason for the migration of Sri Lankan is mainly economic, and their remittances have helped to increase their household income. In addition, remittances have enhanced the ability of migrant families to purchase, and improve family housing and land ownership. Migrant families were able to purchase or upgrade household consumer durables as a result of migration. This suggests that remittances have reduced poverty and improved the access to goods and services, thereby extending substantive freedoms and opportunities for people to improve their living standards.

There is an improvement in the decision making power of migrant women both on financial matters and household activities. Many women were able to acquire some new skills on household activities. However, the economic benefits to some extent are found to be offset by the adverse effects of migration. Remittances supported consumption in nearly all households, but the poorest found it difficult to save or invest their money in productive ways. Although there are substantial social costs involved in female labour emigration, especially associated with the splitting up of families, there have also been positive impacts in terms of improving the role and status of women. The next chapter draws together conclusions from the analysis, discusses the policy implications, and suggests some recommendations.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women are migrating and continue to do so. Their needs are urgent and deserve priority attention. Only then will the benefits of international migration be maximised and the risks minimised. Women migrants are among the most vulnerable to human rights abuses – both as migrants and as females. Their work deserves recognition, and their human rights, protection. Their voices must be heard.

(UNFPA 2006, p.3)

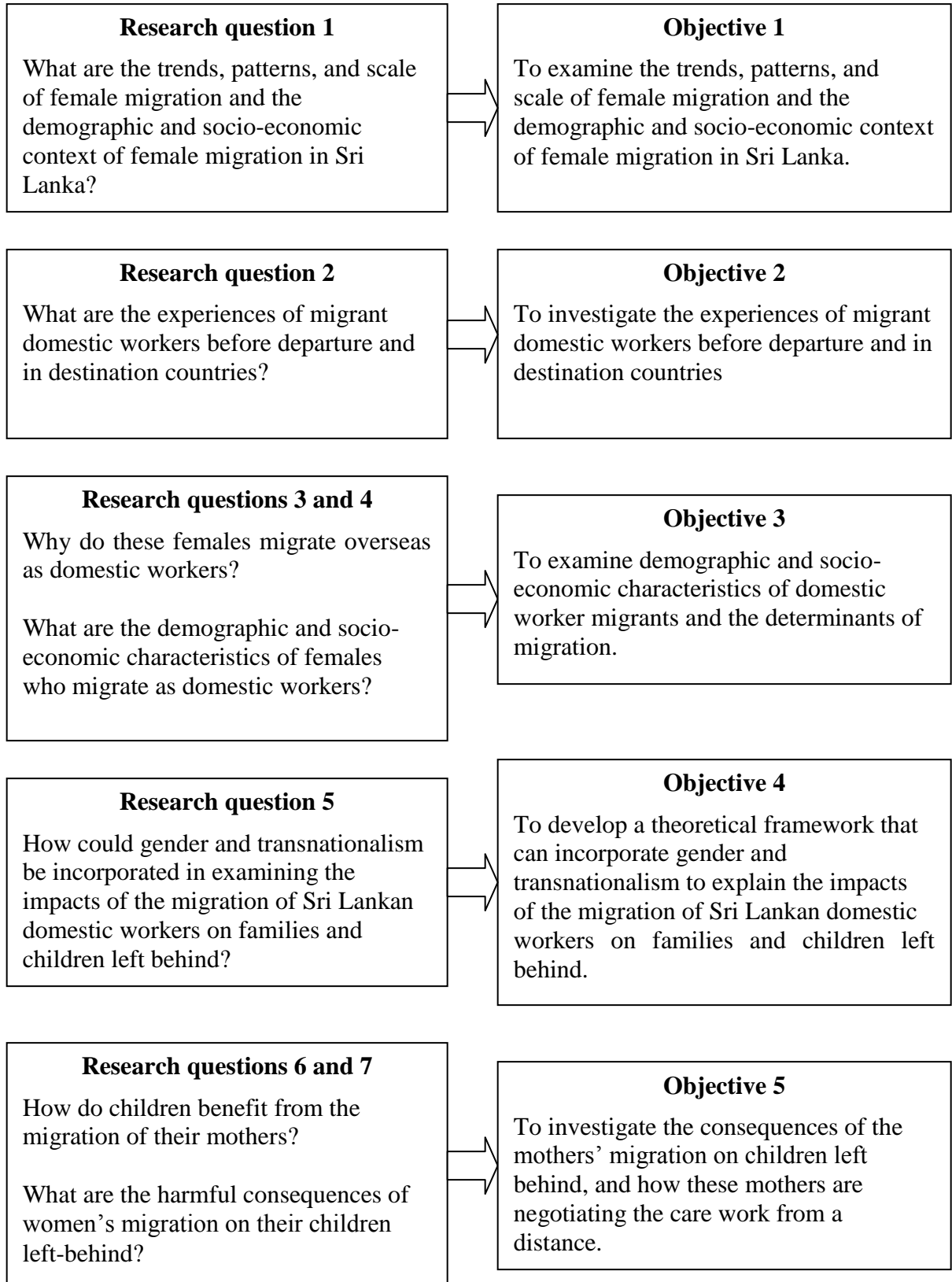
9.1 Introduction

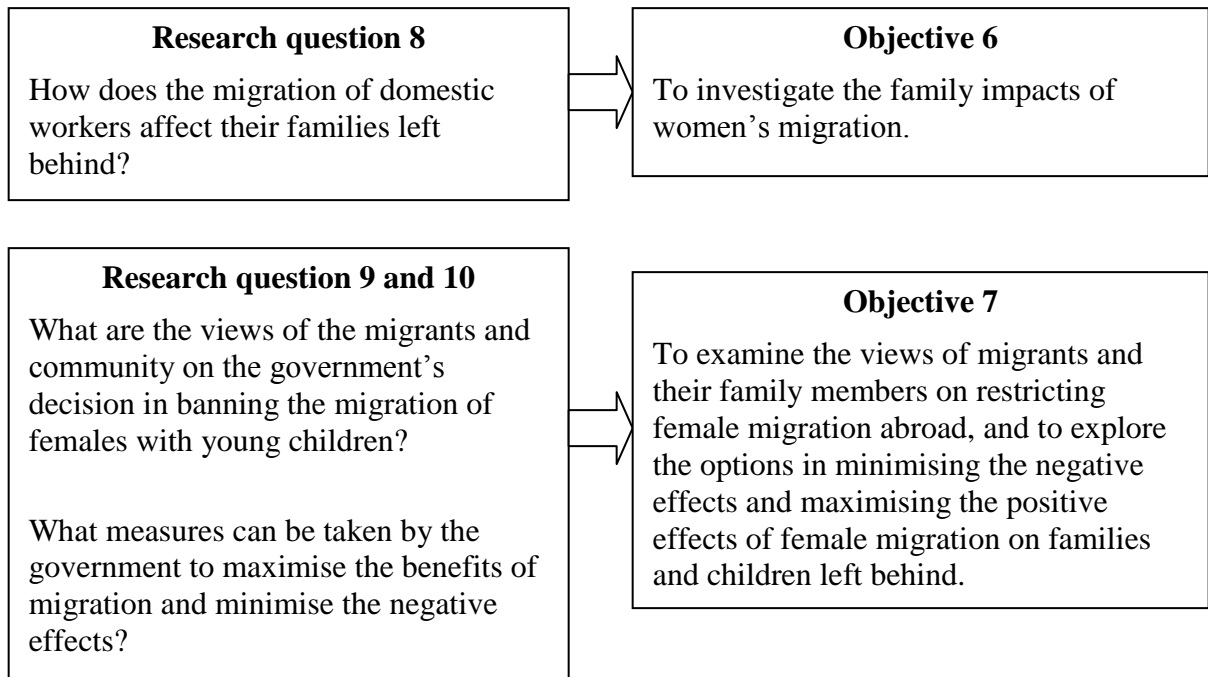
This study has examined how the families and children left behind have been influenced economically and socially by the migration of Sri Lankan women who migrate as domestic workers overseas. It has drawn upon a survey of 217 female domestic workers who had returned to Sri Lanka in the ten years preceding the survey and 183 members of the migrant families when the migrant was still away at the time of the survey. In addition, information gathered in the discussions of focus groups was used to support the arguments that have arisen in the discussion. The migration of these women has become a major policy concern in recent years due to the growing concern about the problems faced by the children left behind by migrant mothers. Moreover, the existing literature has indicated a need for further investigation on this issue. This chapter draws together the conclusions of the study, assesses the extent to which each objective of the study has been achieved, and discusses the implications arising out of the findings. It then makes recommendations that can be used to minimise the negative effects and maximise the positive effects of migration. The chapter concludes with some recommendations for future research while highlighting some of the limitations of the study and presenting some suggestions for future research.

9.2 Findings related to the study's objectives

The main aim of this study is to investigate the economic and social impacts of Sri Lankan females migrating overseas as domestic workers on their families and children left behind. Figure 9.1 illustrates the main research questions of the study and seven objectives, which they sought to achieve.

Figure 9.1 Research questions and the objectives of the study





9.2.1 The demographic and socio-economic context and the trends and patterns of international female migration

Presenting an overview of the demographic and socio-economic context of Sri Lanka and the improvement in socioeconomic levels of females are found to be important in explaining the increasing involvement of females in international migration in Sri Lanka. The first objective served this purpose. With the dramatic decline in fertility and mortality, Sri Lanka has reached the final stage of the demographic transition within a short period compared to other South Asian countries. Consequently, the average annual rate of the growth of population and the sex ratio has decreased indicating more females. In addition, the age sex-structure of the population has also changed. Fertility and mortality that have begun to decline before the 1960s have resulted in a higher growth of the labour force in the past few decades.

With these demographic changes, women's participation in the labour force has seen a gradual and continuous increase over the past few decades. Although there was a structural change in the economy, a movement from agriculture to manufacturing and service sectors, and increasing participation of women in the labour force, the inability to absorb female labour by the Sri Lankan economy has resulted in a higher rate of female unemployment. A higher

proportion of females still engage in agricultural activities, especially as unpaid family workers. However, the economic involvement of women has seen a gradual movement from agricultural to production and service related activities with the introduction of economic liberalisation programme in 1977.

There has also been a noticeable social development of women in Sri Lanka. While the literacy rate of men has been higher than the rate of women, the rise in the literacy levels has been dramatic for women. However, both men and women show a favourable increase in their educational attainment. With the increasing level of education, women have entered the labour force at a faster rate than men. With the increasing level of education and involvement in economic activities, the decision making power of women, especially in household activities and financial activities, has improved. Moreover, as Hewamanne and Muller (n.d. p.121) reveal, the perception of women as 'passive and subordinate' actors within and outside the family has changed.

A considerable proportion of Sri Lankan families live in poverty as reported by the DC&S (2009). Poverty, the problem of unemployment, and the low-income of families in combination with some other factors has stimulated women to migrate overseas as there is no other alternative for them to escape from economic hardship. Moreover, the economic restructuring in Sri Lanka, a result of global economic restructuring, has resulted in a shift of the reproductive work of women to internal and international labour markets as Yeoh *et al.* (2005a) indicate. Since the remittances of migrants have become the second largest foreign earning, the Sri Lankan government has introduced encouraging policies that facilitate migration for overseas employment. Consequently, large numbers of Sri Lankans have departed overseas for employment every year.

It was found that before the 1980s, male departures for employment overseas were higher than for females but thereafter, female departures have been higher. However, a decreasing trend of female departures was apparent due to the encouragement of males to go overseas and the availability of more employment opportunities for men in countries like Korea. Consequently, male departures have again exceeded female departures in 2008 after two decades. The significant feature in the trend and pattern of the departures for foreign employment is the increasing involvement of women as domestic workers. It is also evident that with the

increasing involvement of females in overseas employment, Sri Lanka has become a country with growing numbers of transnational families with mothers being absent for a significant part of the growing up of their children. Women's migration has influenced their families and children economically and socially, and in both positive and negative ways. Although a decreasing trend of female migration for foreign employment is evident, they continue to migrate since their economic needs are urgent.

9.2.2 Migrant domestic workers before their departure and in destination countries

In preparing for migration and in destination countries, female migrants acquire different experiences and confront difficulties that will influence the economic and social benefits of migration. The second objective was developed to examine the experiences of, and the problems faced by, the migrants in preparing for migration and while at the destination. With increasing international labour migration flows since the 1970s, the Sri Lankan government has taken action to regulate and monitor migration flows, and to protect migrants from exploitation and abuse at every stage of migration. By establishing the SLBFE in 1985, the institutional structure of labour migration has strengthened.

Pre-departure

Licensed agencies of the SLBFE play a key role in recruiting women in overseas employment. However, about one third of the migrants in this study had used informal networks. Women who have migrated through personal networks include repeat migrants. They prefer informal channels because of the high cost involved in preparing for migration when they migrate through the licensed agencies. This fact has been confirmed by the findings of other Sri Lankan studies (for example, Kageyama 2008; Shaw 2008a; Gamburd 2005, 2000; Lasagabaster *et al.* 2005; Gunatilleke 1998). It is a high cost for these women because they have to spend about half of the annual income of their husbands in preparing for migration. Although there is a sharp increase in the registered agencies with the compulsory registration of migrants, malpractices still exist in registering migrants because of bogus recruiting agencies. In addition to these malpractices, documents are falsified to meet the requirements of their employers.

It was found that financing migration was one of the grave problems that these migrants face. Every seven in ten returned migrants reported that they had a problem in financing their

migration. The problem was found to be higher in estate areas and lower in rural areas. A lower percentage of women in rural areas who reported such a problem are found due to two reasons. First, the percentage of Muslim women who reported having such a problem is low compared to Sinhalese and Tamil women. They did not face financial problems because the employers in the destination countries send money to the agents requesting Muslim domestic workers, and therefore, agents charge lower fees from Muslim women and some others send free air tickets directly to the employee. Second, 80 per cent of Muslim migrant families of this study are located in rural areas.

This problem was significantly higher among Tamil migrant families. This is due to two reasons: on one hand, the average monthly household income of Tamil migrant families is low compared to Sinhalese and Muslim families. On the other hand, the average number of children that estate women have is 2.6, which is higher than the average number children that women in both urban and rural areas have. This suggests that with their lower levels of income, estate migrant families have to feed more children than the families in both urban and rural areas. Therefore, Tamil migrant families face problems in financing migration than the migrant families of urban and rural areas.

A significant proportion of migrant women depend on moneylenders in financing migration, and they provide loans at high interest rates compared to the interest rates charged by the banks. Although the government has introduced banking facilities to get loans at low interest rates, reasons such as the unavailability of property to keep as a security, lack of knowledge in banking procedures, and easy access to moneylenders appeared as barriers for them to get loans from banks. In addition, borrowing money from relatives and friends and pawning jewellery are also two prevalent methods of finding money by Sri Lankan domestic workers. Some women mortgaged their lands and some others borrowed money from agents. However, because of the higher interest rates charged by private moneylenders, women have to allocate considerable proportions of their earnings to repay such loans in the first few months of their work abroad.

Migrant women commence their working life overseas with a substantial burden of accumulated debt because of borrowing money from these moneylenders at high interest rates. They have to repay debts within a specified period with interest, which is a substantial burden

for migrants that hinder their economic progress. This indicates that more the time they take to recover the loan, more the interest they have to pay. Therefore, there is a need for directing migrants to get loans at low interests, which will not hinder their economic progress.

Pre-departure training and childcare arrangements are seen as other key concerns of these migrants. Pre-departure training was found to be useful and seems to be not sufficient for migrant women since a greater proportion reported that they need further training if they wish to migrate again. However, little more than half of the migrants reported that they received training, and others who did not receive included repeat migrants. Although the training provided by the SLBFE is useful and it covers many aspects that are useful for migrant women, the findings of this study indicate the requirement for extensive training.

Migrants' spouses and extended family members provide the childcare support in the absence of the migrant. However, it was found that about a quarter of the migrants had a problem with childcare because of the unwillingness of their family members to take the responsibility. Migrant women in these families had to convince their husbands and other family members about the economic benefits of migration to get their consent in childcare. This indicates the requirement for childcare arrangements for families those who find it difficult to make arrangements before the departures of migrants. In addition, childcare monitoring programmes are required because the behaviours, education, and health of children are affected by the absence of their mothers. This fact is also highlighted in several studies in the Asian Region (for example, Yeoh and Lam 2007; Save the Children 2006; Asis *et al.* 2004; Parrenas 2002, 2001a; Battistella and Conaco 1998, 1996).

At the destination

Middle East is the destination for Sri Lankan domestic workers. They live in the employer's home and enjoy improved living conditions compared with those prevailing in their own houses in Sri Lanka (Chammartin 2004b; Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004). However, they are more likely to work in poor conditions, and are more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse since they have to live with their employers. Almost all women engage in multiple activities that include cooking, cleaning, childcare, aged care, and washing vehicles. A heavy workload, long working hours, low salary, denial of freedom, and isolation are some of the problems

these migrant women experience while working abroad (Al-Najjir 2004; Chammartin 2004b; Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004).

Abuse is another problem that these women face that can hinder their economic and social progress. Verbal humiliation is the most common form of abuse that almost all respondents reported. While half of the migrant women in this study experienced physical abuse, the reported cases of sexual abuse are very low. Women who are sexually abused are hesitant to divulge them to the others as they think it will create a bad image of themselves. Smaller number of reported cases of sexual abuse reflects the response bias in this survey. However, there is an underestimate of the reported cases of sexual abuse (Al-Najjir 2004; Gamburd 2000). Even if the living and working conditions of the migrants have not been fully investigated, findings on the nature of work, salaries, and abusive conditions emphasise the fact that taking actions is not only the solution to protect migrant workers but the requirement of monitoring the situation.

9.2.3 Reasons for migration and the characteristics of migrants

Why do increasing numbers of Sri Lanka women migrate overseas despite their family commitments? A host of factors at origin and destination, as well as individual reasons, household and country level factors (Ghosh 2009; Eversole 2006) determine their migration. These migrant women come from low-income families and have lower levels of education, which inhibits their possibilities of entering into the local labour market. Even if they are employed in Sri Lanka, their salaries are low, and their families live in poverty. They need money to improve the economic and social well-being of their families. Since they find no other alternatives to earn money in Sri Lanka, they take the decision to migrate. Therefore, the reason for their migration is mainly economic. These economic reasons include poverty, limited employment opportunities for them to work in Sri Lanka, unavailability of permanent jobs for their husbands, repayment of debts, buying a land, building a house, and family obligations. Poverty alleviation and building a house were reported as the main reasons for migration by an equal proportion of migrant families (about 36 per cent). Non-economic reasons such as providing better education and health for their children and recovering husband's illness were reported as main reasons only by a small proportion of families. Although the provision of education for their children was the main reason for migration only

for a small number of families, it is one of the reasons reported by more than half of the families.

Economic development, increasing female labour force participation, limited time that women can spend on household chores and childcare activities, and government policies of destinations countries in the Middle East and Southeast Asia has generated a demand for Sri Lankan migrant workers (Ghosh 2009; SLBFE 2009; Hugo 2005b; Asis 2004a; Chammartin 2004a; Lim and Abella 1994). Moreover, advancements in transportation and communication technologies that link places and people globally, easy access to information in finding job opportunities, quick communication with family members, and quick transfers of remittances made it easy for women to migrate internationally (Sumulong and Zhai 2008; Wickramasekera 2002). Who makes the decision to migrate? Person mainly responsible for the decision to work overseas is the migrant. The migrant women have more power in taking the decision to migrate. Their migration is recognised as a household strategy since the reason for their migration generally for the improvement of the well-being of their families.

Responses of women to the demand for their service are different from the demand of men due to the distinctive characteristics of women (Eversole 2006). Migrant women in this study are in the economically and sexually active age group. Although the majority are from rural areas, a considerable proportion of women are found in urban and estate areas as well. This indicates that the idea of migration for overseas employment is not only popular among urban populations but also among rural and estate populations. Women with financial difficulties have more inclination to migrate irrespective of the area in which they live. Insufficient household income to meet their needs is a major problem of these migrant families. The fact that the migrant women tended to come from poorer families is also reflected in the nature of occupation of the migrants' husbands. A little less than half of them worked as labourers with low salaries. Others also engaged in less prestigious jobs with average monthly income less than US\$ 100 with median of US\$ 80.

Sinhalese migrants still dominated among workers to the Gulf and other countries. However, the proportion of Muslims migrants in the sample is significantly higher than the percentage distribution of the national population. This has to be expected as the major destination for Sri Lankan female domestic workers, the Middle East, prefers to have Muslim women. Unlike

Filipino migrant women, Sri Lankan migrant women have lower levels of education. The number of women with tertiary education was found to be considerably lower. Their lower levels of education can have a strong impact on their salaries, money management, and communicating with their employers. Prevalence of the falsification of documents by these migrant women is revealed by the fact that some migrants had no schooling although these migrants were supposed to have some education to work overseas. Although Sri Lankan women are achieving more educational qualifications in general, the majority of migrant domestic workers have only primary education.

9.2.4 Theoretical framework in incorporating gender and transnational migration

Objective 4 of the thesis was to develop a theoretical framework, which incorporate gender and transnational migration, to be used in examining the economic and social impacts of migration of Sri Lankan migrant domestic workers overseas on their families and children left behind. In developing this, some of the traditional theoretical ideas of labour migration have been examined. It was found that these theoretical ideas have changed over time due to the increasing complexities of migration. However, the inattentiveness of those theories to female labour migration and transnational aspects of migration was recognised. As Massey *et al.* (1993) argue, there is no single theory, which incorporates gender and transnationalism in female labour migration. Therefore, a theoretical framework, which addresses the domestic worker migration, has been developed in this thesis as shown in Figure 4.2 of Chapter 4. In developing it, reasons for migration, experiences of migrants, transnational perspective of migration, and the consequences of migration were taken into account.

9.2.5 Transnational mothering

With the growing numbers of transnational families with mothers being absent for a significant period of the growing up of their children in Sri Lanka many children are mothered from a distance. Consequently, mothering practices of Sri Lankan women have acquired a new meaning since they make childcare arrangements before their departure and mother their children from afar to accommodate their separation from their children (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997). Consequences of mothers' migration on children, and how they are negotiating the care work from a distance was investigated in this study. It was the fifth objective of the study.

Children left behind by Sri Lankan migrant domestic workers are among the millions of children in the world who live without seeing their mothers or fathers or both parents for many years (Yeoh and Lam 2007). Approximately one million children were left behind by female migrants overseas in 2006 (Save the Children 2006, p. 2), and about a quarter of a million children were left behind by the women who departed for foreign employment in 2008. The migrant women in this study left behind approximately 1000 children. It was found that the average number of children that a migrant woman had was 2.3, which is slightly below the current Total Fertility Rate of 2.4 in Sri Lanka (DC&S 2008e, p.8). While it is 2.3 for both urban and rural women, it is significantly higher for estate women (2.6).

Leaving their children to care for the children of other mothers

About 80 per cent of the migrant domestic workers have become part of the “global care chain” since they are involved in both child and aged care. Of women who are involved in care work, the majority are engaged in childcare. This finding suggests that a higher proportion of women who are involved in childcare activities have higher emotional strains than the women who do not. In addition, these women are overburdened with multiple household activities such as care work, cooking, cleaning, and washing vehicles. Extended family members play a key role in helping the migrant women in caring for their children. They have moved in to migrants’ households at the time of their migration for childcare although such movement was not found among estate migrant families.

The migrant’s husband is the person mainly responsible for childcare in the absence of his spouse in many migrant families. The pattern is similar between urban, rural, and estate areas. This is an indication of the transformation of the family system from extended to nuclear. However, this is not always the case as found in other studies in Sri Lanka and other Asian countries. For example, in the Philippines, it is mostly other relatives and not fathers who care for the children left behind (Parrenas 2001a). A study of Save the Children (2006) also reported that most of the primary caregivers in Sri Lanka are close relatives of migrants, and only a quarter is the children’s fathers. In this study, migrants’ parents have also played a key role in childcare. Support given by the migrants’ parents was found to be higher in the estate sector and husbands’ support was equally higher in both the urban and rural sectors. However, estate migrant families did not receive any support from the eldest child of the migrant family

and other relatives. Among those who did not want to leave their children in the care of their husbands many were divorced, separated, or widowed, and were concerned about their husband's behaviour, especially in relation to drugs and alcohol. Almost all children of migrants lived happily with their caregivers. Although the standard of care observed by the caregivers was high, the vacuum left by the mothers' departure was simply not filled by caregivers according to the views of the FGD participants. According to them, even with the presence of other relatives, problems still arise among the children left behind.

Two main policy considerations arise from these findings. First, there is a requirement of institutional support for childcare. It is an urgent requirement for the migrant families in the estate sector where the support from extended family members is low compared to other areas. Second, there is a need to introduce programmes to make fathers and other extended family members aware of proper childcare as well as monitoring programmes. Migrants' husbands are overburdened with economic activities they are involved in, as well as childcare and household activities. They have a psychological burden as Fresnoza-Flot (2009) explains since many of them have been not involved in all these activities before the migration of their wives. In these programmes, special consideration could be given to the husbands of migrants who used to take alcohol and drugs.

Consequences of distant mothering

It has been difficult to draw any strong conclusions on the effects of the migration of Sri Lankan mothers on children as in the case of several studies done in Asia due to the mixed results of the impacts (Yeoh and Lam 2007; Save the Children 2006; Parrenas 2005b, 2005c, 2002; Battistella and Conaco 1996). This is because, for some families positive effects can be higher than the negative effects and for some others vice versa. While it can have positive impacts on education (Bryant 2005; Battistella and Conaco 1998), behaviours of children can be negatively effected (Parrenas 2001a). In this study, the overwhelming proportion of migrant families found that the migration of mothers on children's education has been positive because of the enhanced ability to pay the costs associated with education - tuition fees, books, ability the pay the transportation costs to school, and other requirements. Although a little less than a fifth of migrant families reported no positive or negative effect, the families who reported negative effects were insignificant. In the absence of mothers, children of more than a half of

the families received their fathers' support for their education. It is the help given to do their assignments at home and the encouragement given for their studies. Support given by extended family members, especially grandparents, siblings, and other relations, is also great.

As reported by the survey respondents, the opinion of the school teachers who participated in FGDs was the enhanced ability of migrant families to pay the costs related to children's education. In addition, they reported that these children continue their education at least in the elementary years in school, and wear their uniforms and shoes neatly. However, the lack of interest in education, poor and wrong leadership, and low educational performance are the common problems among these children. One of the reasons given for this is the weak participation of the fathers of children and guardians in parent-teacher meetings in the absence of mothers. The implication of this finding is the requirement of a strong parent-teacher relationship.

In the absence of their mothers, children face problems. Among them, mental and physical health problems along with the strains associated with loneliness, behavioural problems, and problems of schooling were found to be prominent. Some incidences of sexual abuse were also reported. Nearly two thirds of the families have identified the changes in the behaviour of children as a result of mothers' migration. Problems of disobedience and moodiness, and a negative effect on behaviour at school are the major issues. Joining gangs and use of alcohol and drugs are also seen as some negative impacts. It is also interesting to note that a little more than 80 per cent of the respondents identified more than one behavioural change among children. This would suggest that there are widespread influences of mothers' absences on children's behaviour, which needs to be investigated in greater depth. Identification of such changes is higher in estate areas where the extended family relations have been weakened. When the carer is the eldest child, such changes are higher than when the carer is a relative. However, with the increase in the period of work abroad, identification of such changes also increases. More than two thirds of the respondents indicated that they considered that mothers' migration did have an effect on children's behaviour. The effect is higher in estate areas than in urban and rural areas.

Not only the behavioural problems but also illnesses of children as a result of migration have been identified in this study. Although the cases of illnesses as being reported by the

respondents are small in numbers, cases of mental illnesses are significant. A high prevalence of sexually abused cases of children was reported in newspapers, but it is insignificant when compared to the number of children left behind by migrant women. However, a strong call for a child protection service at the community level has emerged from this study, one specific focus of which could be child abuse.

Many of the responses of the FGD participants are related to the negative effects of mothers' migration on children. This leads to several other questions. Will the situation change if these mothers do not migrate? If the migrant is the father, is it possible to expect positive effects on children's education? What is situation of the children in non-migrant families? Is the absence of the mother the only reason for the lack of education of children? These questions need further investigation to understand the real impact of mothers' migration on children's education and behaviour. However, to provide their children with a better future is one of the reasons why some women migrate for work abroad. Yet, education and social and economic mobility of children are critically affected in the absence of an adequate caring and educationally supportive home environment for children. The findings of this study clearly show the need for additional support in the education of children of migrant mothers. Participants of the FGDs strongly recommended that the Parent Teacher Associations could be one of several organisations at the community level that could be more effectively utilised to assist families of migrant mothers in coping with the problems that they are faced with.

Negotiating child care from a distance

Transnational communication - the flow of ideas, information, goods, money, and emotions - is one of the strategies used by migrant workers to maintain contacts with their family members across borders, and to express the emotions of migrants and their children. Post is the most popular mean of communication used to maintain intimacy with the family members, especially with children at home, and commonly used by rural families. Use of land phones, is the second highest method of communication, and is higher among urban families. What is interesting is the low use of mobile phones compared to the Philippines. These findings suggest the need for the improvement in quick communication facilities to maintain close contacts with their family members while they are abroad. The provision of quick communication facilities will enable migrant women to contact their families at least once a week since many of them do not contact their family members regularly. It will also make it

easier to express their emotions, and to repress their emotional strains, especially when these women leave their children in the care of other family members. While husbands and children are the frequently contacted persons by these migrant women, loneliness, issues associated with childcare, and the education of children were problems discussed by them. Moreover, almost all felt that these discussions assisted in reducing the effect of the children's problems.

It is apparent that migration of mothers generally has a beneficial impact on their physical environment. A key question, however, is whether the social costs, which are associated with the migration, counterbalance these positive effects. What is important here is the length of the absence of the mother. It was found that many of these migrant women are repeat migrants since they were not able to achieve their objectives within a short period. The implication of this finding is that mothers have to be away for a significant part of the growing up of their children. This will lead to an idea of finding suitable options in maximising the benefits of their migration on children within a short period. It is interesting that for more than a quarter of migrant families, there was a need for institutional support to be provided to families in order to supplement the support given by husbands and families.

9.2.6 Economic and social impacts of migration on families

The sixth objective of this study was the examination of the family impacts of migration since the migration of Sri Lankan women has brought multiplier effects on their families as found in several studies of the Asian region (for example, Huang *et al.* 2005, 2003; Parrenas 2005b; Wahyuni 2005; Battistella and Asis 2003; Hugo 2002; Zlotnik 1995). These families are influenced economically and socially through the transfers of monetary and social remittances. The overwhelming evidence from the study is that migrant families gain a net economic benefit from migration since there is an increase in the household income, improvement in living conditions and daily consumption, an increase in the ability to invest in productive and non-productive items, and an increase in savings. While the transfer of social remittances in terms of ideas, attitudes, behaviours, and skills have changed the lifestyles of migrants and their families and the gendered roles of migrants and their family members, the separation of migrant women for longer periods has created several problems in migrant families.

Economic impacts

This study indicates an overall positive economic impact of migration on families. It confirms the fact that Sri Lankan migrant women come from low-income families and have financial difficulties in supporting their families economically which has been found in some other migration studies in Sri Lanka (Shaw 2008a; Gamburd 2000; Ratnayake 1999; Eelens 1995; Rodrigo 1995). The following findings of the study reflect the low economic level of female domestic worker migrant families:

- The majority of migrant women had not been contributing to the family income before their migration because only a little more than a quarter of them were employed. Some of the women who worked in Sri Lanka before migration stopped working because their monthly salary was not enough for their daily expenses;
- Most of the husbands of these migrant women have worked as labourers and were not employed as government, semi-government, or private sector employees. Their monthly income is less than US\$ 100. Moreover, they did not have regular work and fixed monthly income; and
- The proportion of families who reported their monthly income was sufficient to meet their family needs before the migration was small.

Therefore, the migration of women overseas has offered them a chance to improve the economic circumstances of the family as found in the study.

The most direct benefit from migration is the rise in the household income. It is reflected in the findings of the increase in the average monthly income of the households, increase in the adequacy of household income, and the increase in migrants' income. Migrant families had a low average monthly household income at the time of their migration, and it is significantly lower (about US \$84) than the national average monthly household income (about US \$232). A significant variation in the income level of migrant families before the migration is found between different sectors with a higher percentage of urban families with income more than SL Rs.10,000. The percentage of families earned an income less than US \$88 (SL Rs.10,000) is higher in estate areas than in urban areas. No such significant variation is found between ethnic groups, but it is slightly lower among Muslim families. With the migration of women,

the average monthly income of the households has increased to about US \$145. Consequently, the proportion of the families whose monthly income was sufficient to meet their family needs has also increased significantly. No significant variation was found between different sectors of the households who reported an increase in the adequacy of the family income because of migration. However, a significant variation was found between different ethnic groups, and Sinhalese households reported the highest increase. In addition, with the migration of women, the percentage of households with less than SL Rs.10,000 (approximately US \$88) has significantly decreased from 62.4 per cent to 15.9 per cent. Although their mean monthly household income has increased as a result of migration, it is yet lower (SL Rs.16454.21, approximately US \$145) than the mean monthly household income of the country (SL Rs.26,286, approximately US \$232).

A positive relationship is found between the percentages of families who reported that their monthly income was sufficient as a result of the migration of women and the duration of work abroad. This finding suggests that migrant women can get more economic benefits in relation to the increase in household income only if they can work more years abroad. The salary of migrants abroad is about three times higher than the salary of migrant women who worked in Sri Lanka before their migration. It indicates that these migrant women greatly benefit economically from their migration because many of the migrants did not work in Sri Lanka before their migration, and women who worked before their migration received a lower salary than what they earned abroad.

Migration has resulted in the ability of women to contribute to the daily expenses of the household. However, the income of migrants' husbands is the main source of income for about three quarters of families. While some migrant women directly contribute to the daily expenses of households, some others contribute to the increase through investments and savings. When compared to the contribution of rural and estate women, the contribution of urban women to their household expenses is low. The contribution of children and other extended family members to monthly expenses is also considerable. In 8.5 per cent of households, it was reported that migrants support their families financially not only by working abroad but also by working in Sri Lanka after their return since 22.1 per cent of the returned migrants have started to work in Sri Lanka after their migration.

It is apparent that migrant women are generally successful in improving the economic situation of their family since there is an increase in the household income. Their migration has resulted in the increase in household income for more than three quarters of the households. There had been a high or moderate increase in income for about one third of the households. However, the reported increase in the household income was higher when the respondents returned. The highest percentage of families who reported that there was no increase of their household income as a result of migration was among Muslim families and the lowest among Sinhalese families. A little less than a tenth of Sinhalese families and 6.5 per cent of the rural families reported a high increase of household income as a result of women's migration. This increase is significant as the duration of work abroad increases. Their remittances not only helped to increase the household income, but also enhanced the ability to purchase and improve family housing and land ownership, and to purchase or upgrade household consumer durables. This suggests that remittances reduce poverty and improve access to goods and services, thereby extending opportunities for people to improve their living standards.

Almost all migrant families sent their full salary or a portion of it to their families or a bank account in Sri Lanka. The percentage of women who did not send money while abroad was higher among urban families, divorced women, and Tamil migrant families. Migrant's husbands were the main recipient of remittances. Parents also play a key role in financial activities of the households since they also receive remittances from migrants. The reasons for not sending money to their husbands was marital break-up, husbands already working abroad, the lack of knowledge of money management of husbands and husband's alcoholism. The study of Shaw (2008a) in Sri Lanka also found that many men of migrant families are unfamiliar with household finance management, and a large proportion of income is spent on alcohol, drugs, or gambling. In the weakening situations of migrants' husbands in financial matters, women gain autonomy and empowerment in the family.

Migration of women is closely related to their family needs, in particular to improve the living standards of their families. While one fifth of the households were able to buy or build a house with the money earned abroad, little less than a quarter were able to upgrade their housing. Although building or buying a house or upgrade housing were some of the aspirations of migrant women, little more than a tenth of migrant domestic worker families

still do not own land or a house. Sri Lankan migrant women bring high cost goods when they return as found in other studies of Indonesia (Hugo 2005c) and India (Rajan 2003). A significant number of migrant families were able to purchase or upgrade major household consumer durables in particular televisions, radios and refrigerators as a result of their migration. There were families who still do not own a radio or a television. Moreover, a significant proportion of families still do not own a refrigerator, a washing machine, or a computer. However, overall economic impacts of migration on monetary conditions, housing, and living conditions are positive. Therefore, the proportion who reported a worsening of their situation is quite small.

Migrant families used the money sent by migrants for multiple purposes. Among them, daily consumption is important. In addition, these families used these remittances for children's education, children's health, and repaying debts. Repaying debts is a grave issue that hinders their economic development. In addition, the lack of knowledge in finance management of husbands is also an issue to be taken into account. A considerable proportion of these families were able invest in productive and non-productive items. Investments in non-productive items such as housing and jewellery are higher than productive items such as land and setting up a business. Moreover, little less than a quarter of these families were able save some money. However, the asset building of these families commonly takes several years with repeat migrations.

Social impacts of migration on families

The migration of Sri Lankan women for employment in a country with a new environment has resulted in an enhancement of their earning ability, changes in gender roles of the migrant and their family members, an increase in the decision making power of migrants, and in acquiring new skills. Women are empowered with a breadwinning role during the period that they work abroad due to the significant economic contribution to their families. However, the percentage of women who work in Sri Lanka upon their return is small, and therefore, they are repeatedly classified as primary caregivers or housewives but not as primary wage earners.

It was found that the decision making power of women in both financial matters and household activities has been enhanced as a result of migration. The enhancement of the decision making power in financial activities is more significant than in household activities.

Not only the percentage of women who make the decision alone has increased but also the joint decision of both the migrant and her husband has increased. As a result, the absolute decision making power of husbands has decreased slightly. This leads to the autonomy of women in making decisions in the family.

It is not only the economic independence and decision making power that women gain through their migration but also confidence, skills, and greater freedom. The majority of these migrants acquired some skills such as the ability to speak a foreign language, proper management of household activities, use of electrical appliances, and the ability to work anywhere are some of them. Achievement of these skills has enabled them to engage in more social work than other women on their return. While these women and their families achieve some sort of skills, for some women, migration plays a role in marital disruption. Some of the migrants have ended their marriages with divorce or separation as a result of migration. This may be due to reasons such as the changing attitudes of women, changes in life style, economic power of women, husbands' alcoholism, and both migrants' and the husbands' extra marital unions. Sexual abuse abroad, extra marital unions of husbands in Sri Lanka and migrants abroad, addiction to drugs and alcohol by husbands, early marriages of their daughters, ill health of migrants due to heavy work load, and the emotional strains of the separation from their family members, decreasing power of their husbands due to the enhancement of the decision making power of migrant women, and family breakdown are some of the negative effects of female migration on families as observed by the FGD participants.

It is impossible to conclude that the impacts of migration on families are solely positive or negative, social costs outweigh economic benefits, or economic benefits outweigh social costs since the study found mixed results of positive as well as negative, social as well as economic impacts. If migrant women find economic benefits are more important than social costs, they will continue migrating. If they are more concerned about social costs, they may stop migrating. Although there are reported cases of negative social impacts of migration in this study, the social costs of migration would appear to have been suppressed by its economic benefits, especially because the reason for their migration is mainly economic and they generally give priority to their economic needs.

It is evident that the migration of women can have both economic and social and as well as both positive and negative impacts on migrants, families and children. The increasing focus of policy makers, scholars, and the public is on social costs although they have realised the economic benefits of migration. Hence, in planning female migration two options remain to be considered. If no restrictions or bans are imposed, what measures can be taken to minimise the negative effects of migration and maximise the positive effects? If restrictions or bans are imposed, what problems will arise? These two aspects are discussed in the next section along with the theoretical implications of migration in relation to the fifth and sixth objectives of the study.

9.3 Policy implications and recommendations

The seventh objective of the study is to examine the views of migrants and their family members on restricting female migration abroad and to explore the options in minimising the negative effects and maximising the positive effects of migration on families and children left behind. According to the findings of this study, it appears that women's migration improves the economic well-being of migrants and their families left behind through an increase in household income and enhancing the ability to purchase family housing and household consumer durables. The social well-being of migrants improves not only through the increased involvement in decision making power both on financial matters and household activities but also the involvement in social activities outside the home. Skills acquired by the migrant play a key role in this regard. Moreover, there is a noticeable improvement in the material well-being of children, which probably flows through children's education and health. However, a range of negative consequences of migration that can be brought to the attention of policy makers have been identified from the findings discussed above.

The government of Sri Lanka has taken action to create institutions to study, legislate, and administer the migration flows with the recognition of the increasing involvement of both men and women in overseas employment as discussed in Chapter 5. The government has recognised the importance of the contribution of migrants' remittances to the country's economic development, and therefore, policy interest has mainly been focused towards the country's economy. With the rapid growth of the migration of women especially as domestic workers, the government with the help of the SLBFE and other relevant organisations introduced some policies to protect female migrants and to assist the migrants to overcome

their barriers at every stage of the migration process. The following are some of the policies implemented by the Sri Lankan government as recorded by Dias and Jayasundere (2004b, p.159) and Marga Institute and CIDA (1999, pp.3-16):

- Dissemination of information to prospective migrants by the SLBFE through its regional offices, distribution of hand outs at the airport, and conducting training and orientation programmes;
- Maintenance of local licensed job agencies and job orders received by the SLBFE;
- Opening up of the SLBFE branches in several districts;
- Introduction of the compulsory registration with the SLBFE and empowering the airport authority to issue tickets only if the passport bears the SLBFE stamp;
- Provision of training in the use of modern household equipment, making migrants aware of the laws and regulations relating to foreign employment, and issuing a certificate at the end of the training;
- Introduction of Standard Employment Contract;
- Stipulation of a minimum wage for a domestic worker, free food, accommodation, medical facilities, and a two way air ticket;
- Appointment of Sri Lankan attaches to some of the missions to attend to migrants' needs;
- Provision for the SLBFE to mediate on complaints of migrants, who have registered with the SLBFE, relating to working conditions, non-payment of wages, breach of contract, lack of communication with family, deaths, and injuries;
- Introduction of an insurance scheme for migrants;
- Provision of loans to migrants at the stages of pre-departure and on return;
- Introduction of a scholarship scheme for the education of children of migrants;
- Provision of educational instruments to children; and
- Provision of health care services to improve the health condition of migrant families.

However, policy interest towards families and children left behind by migrant women, for example, the provision of childcare arrangements, monitoring childcare practices, and the progress of families, and quick communication facilities, is still lacking. Although an attempt has been made by the government to propose a new legislation as explained in Chapter 1, it was found that it would be unworkable. Therefore, the following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study.

Recommendation 1: Introduce a programme to monitor pre-departure preparation and the proper use of remittances to avoid the barriers that hinder the development of migrant families.

To implement a monitoring programme, it is necessary to appoint government officers to each DS Division depending on the scale of migrants in each area. They need to communicate with the SLBFE and community leaders to identify the prospective migrants. Identification of such migrants will help to direct them to banks to get loans if they have any financial difficulties since borrowing money from moneylenders and repaying debt with high interest is a major obstacle that hinders the economic benefits of migration. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the reasons, if these migrants prefer to get loans from private moneylenders, and take suitable actions to encourage them to use banking services and minimise the difficulties that they encounter in communicating with banks if any. In addition, there is a need to encourage these women to use banking services while they are abroad and upon their return. The inadequate savings, inability to invest in productive ways, and the lack of money management of these migrants and their husbands are seen as important barriers that need special attention. This programme will help to reduce pre-departure costs and the use the money earned abroad in productive ways to the development of their families.

Recommendation 2: Initiate programmes to integrate migrant women into productive economic activities upon their return with the help of Divisional Secretaries and Grama Niladharies.

Migrant families have low income, and therefore, they depend on migrants' earnings abroad. A large portion of the money earned by them is spent on daily consumption although there is an increase in the household income as a result of migration. The increase in household

income indicates the possibility of allocating a portion of the income on productive investment. About 90 per cent of the returned migrants had the opinion that they support the government's proposal of banning female migration because they need to stay in Sri Lanka and earn money if they are provided with employment opportunities, especially self-employment. Since they prefer to stay in the family and earn money in Sri Lanka, it is important to get them involved in, at least the migrants who returned to Sri Lanka after a several years of work abroad, self-employment activities if no other employment opportunities are available for them. This programme will help the migrant to avoid repeat migrations and to stay at home with the family.

Recommendation 3: Revise the existing training programmes to meet the requirements of the migrants, and introduce a new programme for returned migrants.

The SLBFE provides training for domestic workers. Current programmes are needed to be revised and strengthened using the responses of the returned migrants on the effectiveness of the programme since many of the returned migrants suggested the need for further training. A special training session has to be organised for the husbands of migrants and the family members who are responsible for childrearing and other household activities about proper childcare practices and money management. Follow-up training is required upon their return for a successful re-integration into the household economy. Saving money, productive investments, money management, and strengthening family relationships are some of the themes to be included in the training programme.

Recommendation 4: Introduce counselling programmes to migrants and to their family members, especially for their husbands and children to alleviate the problems arising due the separation.

As a result of migration, many of the migrants take the decision making power, especially in handling financial matters, of the family. This has resulted in diminishing the absolute decision making power of the husbands. In addition, the worsening economic situation of the families, marriage breakdowns, changes in the behaviour of children, use of alcohol and drugs by husbands and children, early marriages of children, children's ill health, school dropouts,

and child abuse are some of the negative effects identified. Therefore, these negative effects of migration need to be taken into consideration in developing programmes.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen the programmes that are introduced to search the grievances of the migrants while working abroad and take immediate action to solve their problems or to bring them back to Sri Lanka if the problems are difficult to solve.

The Sri Lankan government and the SLBFE take suitable actions to solve the problems faced by the migrants at the destinations through the missions established in destination countries. However, there is a need of a strong commitment of the responsible government officials in these difficult situations. It is also important to consider the possibility of return visits midway in the contract.

Recommendation 6: Provide child care arrangements at an institutional level for those who do not have proper childcare at the family level.

Provision of proper childcare is a crucial issue of the migration of women as a strong call for a child protection service at the community level has emerged from this study, one specific focus of which could be sexually abused children. Childcare arrangements at the institutional level are a requirement for some of the migrant families and many prefer to have this support with educational facilities. There is a need to monitor childcare arrangements provided by the migrants in their absence and to observe how the arrangements work although the majority of the migrant families reported that their children lived happily with their caregivers.

Recommendation 7: Develop quick communication facilities to facilitate women to have intimate contacts with family members especially with children.

The majority of migrant domestic worker families still do not use modern communication methods. Communication through the post is not a quick way to have contacts with families. They do not own computers, and their computer literacy is very low. It is necessary for all of these to have at least a land phone. Quick communication with family members will help to

reduce the emotional strains of the migrant women as well as their husbands, children, and elderly persons.

Recommendation 8: Empower the leadership to the Ministry of Education to initiate programmes to observe and monitor the standards of educational performance and behavioural issues of the children left behind by migrant women.

Providing their children with a better future is one of the reasons why some women migrate for work abroad. Yet, education and social and economic mobility of children are critically affected in the absence of an adequate caring and educationally supportive home environment for children. The findings of this study clearly show the need for additional support in the education of children. A participant of the FGDs strongly recommended that the Parent Teacher Associations could be one of several organisations at the community level that could be more effectively utilised to assist families of migrant mothers in coping with the problems that children are faced. To introduce awareness programmes on the specific emotional consequences of parental absence in schools, as they can be very helpful to children to reduce their emotional strains due to mothers' separation. In addition, children of migrants can benefit from teachers and counsellors who are more aware of the issues related to parental absence because of migration. To initiate such programmes, it is possible to obtain the support from religious affiliations to develop spiritual formation.

Recommendation 9: Make the migrants and their family members aware of negative consequences of migration and how to alleviate them through the media.

Media especially the television, radio, and newspapers can be used to make these migrants and families aware of negative consequences of migration, and introduce programmes that can be focussed on minimising these effects and maximising the positive effects of migration.

Although the government of Sri Lanka proposed new legislation to restrict the migration of women with children, it would be unworkable due to the following reasons that are explained in Chapter 1:

- they may find alternatives, often undocumented, to migrate or to earn money; easy access to information about opportunities abroad;
- women's' migration will further violate their rights to freedom of mobility, development and employment of women; and
- it will affect the Sri Lankan economy.

If the government does not allow women to migrate or make any restrictions, the following suggestions can be made:

Recommendation 10: Introduce programmes to provide vocational training to females enabling them to engage in self-employment activities since the majority of the migrant women are of lower educational levels.

Apart from being involved in economic activities such as agricultural work for pay, unpaid family work, or domestic work in Sri Lanka for less pay compared to the salary of foreign countries, potential migrants do not have any other alternative to earn money without going abroad. The majority of returned migrants did not work before migration and they want to stay at home if they can find money for their family's survival. Since these migrants are of lower levels of education, vocational training for women those who need to be involved in economic activities is required.

Recommendation 11: Identify the skills of the children those who do not continue their education due to financial or other problems and develop their skills enabling them to be absorbed by the national labour market.

If the government is planning to ban or restrict female migration, it must not be an immediate action since it is likely to lead to the above mentioned problems. Therefore, the skills of a younger generation can be developed enabling them to enter the labour force as employed persons. As the study found, the children of migrant families also support their family financially, and therefore, the possibility of children in engaging in economic activities will help to reduce the financial burden of families.

Recommendation 12: Explore more employment opportunities abroad for men.

The government with the help the Ministry of Labour relations and Foreign Employment and the SLBFE has explored more employment opportunities for males and as a result, more males have migrated to countries like Korea for employment.

This study has produced a wealth of information on the positive and negative effects of women's migration as well as the social and economic impacts on the families and children left behind since the rationale behind the objectives of the study is to add more knowledge to the existing body of literature. However, there are some limitations that restrict the scope of the study and the gap in the knowledge to better understand the study topic still exists. Discussion of those limitations and gaps will help to identify future research requirements.

Recommendation 13: Establishing a comprehensive gender specific database on international labour migration from Sri Lanka with the help of the SLBFE.

This is urgently required for policy planning especially in relation to female migration. This should include a list of both male and female labour migrants those who departed, currently working abroad, and those who have returned home. This task seems difficult, but it is possible to commence on a trial basis selecting one DS Division of a lesser number of migrant workers.

Recommendation 14: Expand the library of the SLBFE as it is the central place that the researchers and policy maker can obtain the required information.

A collection of books, articles, research work etc. is required with the support of other foreign libraries. It was found that all published and unpublished research work done in the Sri Lankan context is not available in the SLBFE library. As an initial step, it is possible to get a comprehensive bibliography with the help of the researchers and find the documents that are not available in the library. Then, it is required to get the documents that are not available in the library from other libraries or authors in Sri Lanka or from international libraries in which these documents are available. Finally, published books, journals and articles on labour migration in the context of other Asian countries could be collected. For this purpose, it is

possible to get the support from the IOM branch in Sri Lanka. The expansion of the library will not only be helpful for further research but also is required for more appropriate planning.

Recommendation 15: Conduct a national survey on labour migration to better understand the causes and consequences.

International labour migration plays a significant role in influencing the migrants, families, community, and economic growth of the country. There have been several national surveys conducted in relation to fertility and mortality in Sri Lanka but not in relation to international migration. Conducting a national migration survey in relation to labour migration will be useful as labour migration changes the economic and social behaviour of migrant families in Sri Lanka.

Recommendation 16: Conduct a large scale study to investigate the impacts of the migration of both men and women on the children left behind using a control group of non-migrant families with similar socio-economic levels.

For policy purposes, the most important gaps in current knowledge about the children left behind by migrant mothers probably concern differences among children in male and female migrant families. For instance, there is still no conclusive evidence on whether the children of women who work overseas suffer more problems than children of absent fathers and children of both parents at home with similar socio-economic levels of the families with migrant women. A sensible first stage in filling this gap would be to exploit existing household survey data. Most research dealing with children of migrant mothers in Sri Lanka has been in small-scale studies, and therefore, does not indicate the full situation in the country. To make sensible decisions on whether, where, and how to assist children of migrants requires large scale information on the children left behind and the problems they face since much remains to be learned about the lives of these children.

Recommendation 17: Conduct a study of “global care issue” in the Sri Lankan context.

It was found in this study that the nature of work for the majority of the migrants involves child and aged care. Consequently, these women have become a part of the global care chain

as mentioned in Chapter 6. It is a current global issue and, therefore, investigations on how the family members take care of these children, emotional strains of children, and the caring practices of Sri Lankans abroad are required.

9.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research

This thesis has produced a wealth of information for a deeper understanding of the impacts of women's migration on the families and children left behind. However, there are limitations that restrict a comprehensive analysis of some aspects of the study. These limitations are discussed below to make suggestions for future research.

This study has collected a vast amount of data from female migrant families. When analysing data in relation to the impacts of migration, it was found necessary to compare the results with non-migrant families and male migrant families with similar socio-economic levels. Time and cost factors prevented the collection of data from these control groups. This has severely restricted a comparative analysis of female migrant families with control groups as well as to make strong conclusion about the impacts of migration and well-being of children. A recommendation therefore can be made to use control groups in conducting research of this nature in the future.

The impacts of migration are associated with the experiences of migrant women in each stage of the migration process, pre-departure, in destination and upon their return. Some questions that are useful in understanding these experiences are found to be omitted in the questionnaire. For example, detailed information about the recruitment procedures and working and living conditions abroad were not collected in the survey. This has limited a comprehensive analysis of the experiences of migrants before departure and in destination countries. In such situations, the researcher compromised by using evidence from other surveys undertaken in Sri Lanka. In future, it would be beneficial if surveys of this nature could gather information of the experiences of migrants at every stage of the migration process that will affect the success of their migration.

The impacts of mothers' migration on children can be varied according to the age of children. In examining the changes in the behaviour of children, it was found important to analyse the changes in behaviours by age. However, a question to identify their age was not included in

the questionnaire. It is a major limitation of this study. Age of children is an important variable to be included in examining the consequences of mother's migration on children.

In this study, it was found that the social costs of women's migration are mostly related to their children. More research is needed in this area, as the majority of the migrant women have become a part of the "global care chain" which is a result of a care crisis throughout the world. They leave their children and the aged in the care of other family members at home to care for the children of other mothers and aged people for pay in higher income countries. The global care chain offers considerable benefits, albeit with some serious drawbacks such as the separation from their children and other loved ones at home. The care crisis occurs in destination countries especially the Middle East, the major destination for Sri Lankan female domestic workers, due to several reasons such as economic development, the increasing involvement of women in labour force participation, unwillingness of local women to engage in 3-D jobs and government policies. On the other hand, economic factors such as severe economic hardship, poverty and the compelling desire for a better standard of living are some of the main reasons, which stimulate Sri Lankan women to migrate overseas for employment. Therefore, more research in the area of the care chain in relation to Sri Lankan migrant women is needed in the future. Moreover, with the small sample size and the process of selecting the respondents through personal networks rather than using a sampling frame do not allow results to be generalised to the total population of migrants.

9.5 Future prospects of female migration in Sri Lanka

The government of Sri Lanka has realised the continuing importance of migration for overseas employment for the economy and society and the rapid growth of migrant numbers with associated vulnerability, protection, and welfare issues. Therefore, the Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare of the government of Sri Lanka has developed a National Policy on Labour Migration in 2008. The policy has the following goals (Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare, p. 1):

1. To develop a long-term vision for the role of labour migration in the economy;
2. To enhance the benefits of labour migration on the economy, society, and the migrant workers and their families left behind and minimise its negative impacts; and

3. To work towards the fulfillment and protection of all human and labour rights of migrant workers.

The focus of this policy is to regulate the migration process, promote skilled migration, and to minimise the negative effects of migration. In regulating the migration process, good governance is recognised as vital. It includes ‘effective institutions and regulations, as well as protecting human rights, promoting wider participation in the institutions and rules that affect people’s lives and achieving more equitable economic and social outcomes’ (Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare, p. 9). More attention has paid on low-skilled workers, which includes female domestic workers, since they face violations of human rights, including labour rights, harassment and abuse at the work place due to lack of adequate education and training, language skills and capacity to conform to work demands. The policy has a special focus on protecting and empowering migrant workers and their families in three stages of migration process: pre-departure, in-service and return and reintegration since the government has recognised the vulnerability of migrant workers, both men and women, to discrimination, exploitation, and abuse.

Females are migrating for overseas employment and will migrate in the future. Therefore, monitoring the progress of the Action Plan is required at every stage of the migration process, especially in relation to female migration, to minimise the negative effects and maximize the positive effects of migration.

9.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, conclusions drawn from the main findings of the study corresponding to the objectives of the study have been discussed. Seventeen recommendations have been made focusing on the measures that can be taken in minimising the negative effects and maximising the positive effects of migration, in providing employment opportunities for women in Sri Lanka if they do not need to migrate, and in developing future research. In Sri Lanka, the overseas work of mothers is considered by many not as a transitory phenomenon but a problematic feature for the society. However, research and statistics on foreign earnings over the last few decades show that the earnings of the migrant women have contributed to a better quality of life for the family while contributing to the country’s economic growth. Although there are several negative impacts of mothers’ migration on the children left behind, it would

be wrong to conclude that female migration results only in the neglect of children. Policy makers are well aware of both these aspects and have already initiated some programmes for the welfare of the children left behind. It is important for policy makers to (re)address policy issues at the family level. For the children left behind, there needs to be different policies catering to the needs of the different age groups of children, from infants to teens and young adults. Policy makers should avoid the pitfall of focusing solely on children left behind and neglecting the other members left behind, such as caregivers and extended family members. As reported by the UNFPA (2006), women are migrating, and will continue to migrate in the future. Their voices must be heard and needs priority attention at the family level.

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APPENDIX I



RESEARCH BRANCH
RESEARCH ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE UNIT

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25 October 2007

Professor GJ Hugo
Geographical and Environmental Studies

Dear Professor Hugo

PROJECT NO: *The social and economic impacts of Sri Lankan female out-migration on families and children*
H-143-2007

I write to advise you that the Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the above project. Please refer to the enclosed endorsement sheet for further details and conditions that may be applicable to this approval.

Approval is current for one year. The expiry date for this project is: 31 October 2008

Where possible, participants taking part in the study should be given a copy of the Information Sheet and the signed Consent Form to retain.

Please note that any changes to the project which might affect its continued ethical acceptability will invalidate the project's approval. In such cases an amended protocol must be submitted to the Committee for further approval. It is a condition of approval that you immediately report anything which might warrant review of ethical approval including (a) serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants (b) proposed changes in the protocol; and (c) unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project. It is also a condition of approval that you inform the Committee, giving reasons, if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.

A reporting form is available from the Committee's website. This may be used to renew ethical approval or report on project status including completion.

Professor Garrett Cullity
Convenor
Human Research Ethics Committee



RESEARCH BRANCH
RESEARCH ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE UNIT

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Applicant: Professor GJ Hugo

Department: Geographical and Environmental Studies

Project Title: *The social and economic impacts of Sri Lankan female out-migration on families and children*

THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Project No: **H-143-2007** RM No: 0000007999

APPROVED for the period until: 31 October 2008

Thank you for the supplementary information dated 11.10.07 and 24.10.07. It is noted that this study will be conducted by Swarnalatha Ukwatta, PhD candidate.

Refer also to the accompanying letter setting out requirements applying to approval.

Professor Garrett Cullity
Convenor
Human Research Ethics Committee

Date: 24 OCT 2007

APPENDIX II



Participant Information Sheet

Dear Participant,

Survey on the social and economic impacts of Sri Lankan female out-migration on families and children

I am Swarnalatha Ukwatta, a student reading for PhD at the Discipline of Geographical and Environmental Studies in the University of Adelaide in Australia. I am undertaking a research as part of my PhD program. The main objective of my study is to investigate the social and economic impacts of Sri Lankan female migration for employment abroad on families and children left behind. It also aims at exploring the solutions to minimize the negative impacts and to maximize the positive impacts of migration on families and children.

It is understood that the female migrants in Sri Lanka play a significant role not only in the economic growth of the country by contributing to the stock of foreign exchange but also to the development of their families. Monetary and non-monetary remittances earned by women have both positive and negative impacts on their families and children. Therefore, an attempt will be made in this study to look at both economic and social contribution to the families of the migrants.

For this study, I collect information from the females who returned within the last five years after working abroad and husbands/relatives of the female migrants working abroad at the time of the survey. As this study focuses on the social and economic impacts of female migration on families, I need to ask few questions on income and expenditure patterns of your family. By collecting all this information, it is possible to identify the key issues which policy makers have to pay more attention on.

The interview would take about 45 minutes. Do not think that you are wasting your valuable time. Your valuable and genuine ideas would help not only to complete my study but also to contribute to the body of the knowledge that the government and the others in making decisions to improve the future of the female migrants and their families. All information collected at this survey will be treated as strictly confidential. Please feel free to answer the questions ask by the interviewer. Please note that you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to.

Important points to be considered:

- Participation in this survey is completely voluntary
- The information provide by you is strictly confidential and anonymous
- Permission will be sorted if the interview is to be recorded via audio
- Results of the survey will not be analysed and published at individual level and will not be able to identify or trace you personally
- If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to sign a consent form

Please do not hesitate to contact me and/or my supervisors Prof. Graeme Hugo and/or Dr. Dianne Rudd if you need to obtain more information about the study. Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Swarnalatha Ukwatta

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APPENDIX III

Serial number

All information collected at this survey will be treated as strictly confidential. Individual information will not be released.



Survey of the social and economic impacts of Sri Lankan female out-migration on families and children

2008

Questionnaire for female returned migrants

Survey of the social and economic impacts of Sri Lankan female out-migration on families and children

Questionnaire for female returned migrants

Identification particulars	
District	<input type="checkbox"/>
DS Division	<input type="checkbox"/>
GN Division	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sector (Urban/Rural)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Household number	<input style="width: 20px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 20px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 20px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>

Date of interview Year Month

Name of the interviewer

Name of the editor

Address of the respondent

.....

.....

Household schedule

First, I would like to know some information about the members of your household

Line No. 1	Name Record the name of the head of the household first. List all the members living in this household including those who work abroad and away from home at the time of the survey. 2	Relationship to head of household 3	Sex 1. Male 2. Female 4	Age in years Age as at the last birth day 5	Ethnic Group 6	Religion 7	Marital Status 8	Education 9	Type of activity 1. Employed 2. Student 3. Other 10	Migration status 11			
										Non-migrant	Returned		Currently work abroad
											Before Jan 1998	After Jan 1998	
01										1	2	3	4
02										1	2	3	4
03										1	2	3	4
04										1	2	3	4
05										1	2	3	4
06										1	2	3	4
07										1	2	3	4
08										1	2	3	4
09										1	2	3	4
10										1	2	3	4
11										1	2	3	4
12										1	2	3	4
13										1	2	3	4
14										1	2	3	4

Codes: Relationship to head of household

01 - Head of household

02 - Husband/wife

03 - Son/daughter

04 - Son-in-law/daughter-in-law

05 - Grand son/grand daughter

06 - Parents

07 - Grand father/mother

08 - Brother/sister

09 - Other relative

10 - Other

Ethnic group

1 - Sinhalese.

2 - Tamil

3 - Sri Lanka Moor

4 - Burgher Malay

5 - Malay

6 - Other

Religion

1 - Buddhist

2 - Hindu

3 - Islam

4 - Roman Catholic

5 - Christian

6 - Other

Marital status

1 - Never married

2 - Currently married

3 - Divorced/Widowed

Separated

Education

1 - Primary (Grades 1-5)

2 - Secondary (Grades 6-11)

3 - Tertiary (O.L/A.L)

4 - Degree

5 - Other

IMPORTANT:

1. Interview women with children who worked overseas as domestic workers more than one year and returned to Sri Lanka after January 1998.

2. Circle the line number of eligible respondent in column 1 if columns 4=2 and 8=2 or 3 and 11=3

Individual information

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 1	Interviewer: Enter identification particulars from the household schedule.	
	a. District	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. D. S. Division	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. G. N. Division	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	d. Sector	<input type="checkbox"/>
	e. Household number	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	f. Respondent's line number	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Now, I would like to know some information about you and your household.		
Q. 2	<p>a. Is there a difference between the persons currently live and the persons lived in the household at the time first you migrated?</p> <p>Interviewer: Read the instruction manual.</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 3</p>
	<p>b. What is the difference?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record the response/all responses.</p>	<p>.....</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>c. What are the reasons for the difference?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record the response/all responses.</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
Q. 3	<p>a. Type of family (current)</p> <p>Interviewer: Decide according to the definition.</p>	<p>Nuclear family 1</p> <p>Extended family.....2</p>
	<p>b. Type of family (at the time you first migrated)</p> <p>Interviewer: Probe and record.</p>	<p>Nuclear family 1</p> <p>Extended family.....2</p>
Q. 4	<p>a. What is your marital status?</p>	<p>Currently married..... 1</p> <p>Divorced .....2</p> <p>Widowed.....3</p> <p>Separated.....4</p>
	<p>b. What is the marital status at the time you first migrated?</p> <p>Interviewer: If Q. 4(a) is not equal to 1 (If the respondent is not currently married), ask Q. 4(c). Otherwise, Go to Q. 5.</p>	<p>Never married..... 1</p> <p>Married.....2</p> <p>Divorced .....3</p> <p>Widowed.....4</p> <p>Separated.....5</p>
	<p>c. What is reason for being divorced/widowed/separated?</p>	<p>Migration 1</p> <p>Other (specify) .....2</p>
Q. 5	<p>a. Have you ever attended school?</p>	<p>Yes..... 1</p> <p>No .....2 Go to Q. 6</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions												
	b. What is the highest educational qualification you have?	Primary (passed grades 1-5)..... 1 Secondary (passed grades 6-11)..... 2 G. C. E. O/L 3 G. C. E. A/L 4 Degree..... 5 Technical/vocational 6 Other (specify) 7												
Q. 6	a. How often do you read newspapers?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Before migration</th> <th>After migration</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Daily.....</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Seldom</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Before migration	After migration	Daily.....	1	1	Seldom	2	2	Never	3	3
		Before migration	After migration											
	Daily.....	1	1											
Seldom	2	2												
Never	3	3												
b. How often do you watch television?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Before migration</th> <th>After migration</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Daily.....</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Seldom</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Before migration	After migration	Daily.....	1	1	Seldom	2	2	Never	3	3	
	Before migration	After migration												
Daily.....	1	1												
Seldom	2	2												
Never	3	3												
c. How often do you listen to the radio?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Before migration</th> <th>After migration</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Daily.....</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Seldom</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Before migration	After migration	Daily.....	1	1	Seldom	2	2	Never	3	3	
	Before migration	After migration												
Daily.....	1	1												
Seldom	2	2												
Never	3	3												
Q. 7	a. Is/was your husband employed?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to (e)												
	b. What is his occupation? Interviewer: Write the occupation clearly. <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>												
	c. What is the employment status?	Government 1 Semi government..... 2 Private..... 3 Other (specify)..... 4												

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	d. What is his monthly income?	Rs. <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Don't know 99999 Go to Q. 8
	e. What is the reason for not working? <input type="checkbox"/>
Q. 8	a. Are you currently employed?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to (d)
	b. What is your current occupation? Interviewer: Write the occupation clearly. <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
	c. What is your monthly income?	Rs. <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Go to Q. 9
	d. What is the reason for not working?	Needs to go abroad again 1 Have enough savings..... 2 Thinks no jobs available..... 3 Due to husband's disapproval 4 Fed up of working 5 Needs to take care of children 6 Other (specify)..... 7
Q. 9	a. Do you now have sufficient income to support your family financially?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 10
	b. What is the monthly income of your household?	Rs. <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
	c. What are the sources of income of the household? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses	Money earned overseas 1 Husband's income 2 Children's income 3 Parents' income 4 Other (specify)..... 5

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	d. What is the main source of income ?	Money earned overseas 1 Husband's income 2 Children's income 3 Parents' income 4 Other (specify)..... 5 Go to Q. 11
Q. 10	How do you get money for daily living expenses of the household? Interviewer: Record all responses	..... ..... .....
Q. 11	a. Did you have sufficient income to support your family financially before you migrated the first time ?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 12
	b. What was the monthly income of your household before you migrated?	Rs. <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
	c. What was the main source of income?	Money earned by myself 1 Husband's income 2 Children's income 3 Parents' income 4 Other (specify)..... 5
Q. 12	When did you start working overseas for the first time ?	Year <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
Q. 13	a. What is the nature of your work the last time ? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses	Cooking 1 Taking care of children..... 2 Taking care of the aged 3 Cleaning..... 4 All the above work 5 Other (specify)..... 6
	b. In which country did you work? <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>c. What is the contract period?</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> years</p>
	<p>d. Did you work continuously during that period?</p>	<p>Yes 1 Go to Q. 14 No 2</p>
	<p>e. What is the reason for not working continuously?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all reasons</p>	<p>.....</p>
	<p>f. How often did you visit Sri Lanka during your contract period?</p>	<p>Once in six months....1 Once in a year .....2 Once in two years 3 Didn't visit 4 Go to Q. 14</p>
	<p>g. What are the reasons for your visits?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all reasons</p>	<p>.....</p>
<p>Q. 14</p>	<p>a. Did you work in another country before that?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 15</p>
	<p>b. In which country did you work?</p>	<p>..... <input type="text"/></p>
	<p>c. What is nature of your work there?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Cooking 1 Taking care of children.....2 Taking care of the aged .....3 Cleaning.....4 All the above work .....5 Other (specify).....6</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 15	<p>a. What is the total number of years you worked overseas?</p> <p>Interviewer: If the answer is 5 years or more ask Q. 15 (b). Otherwise, ask Q. 16.</p>	<p>1 year 1 2 years.....2 3 years.....3 4 years.....4 5 years.....5 5 years or more 6</p>
	<p>b. What are the advantages of working a longer period of time?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Saved enough money.....01 Built a house .....02 Improved the condition of the house .03 Bought household appliances .....04 Bought jewellery .....05 Started a business .....06 Bought a vehicle .....07 Improved education of children.....08 Improved health condition.....09 Improved living condition 10 Other (specify) 11</p>
	<p>c. What are the disadvantages of working a longer period of time?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Marriage disruption 1 Husband used to take alcohol .....2 Disruption of family relations .....3 Misbehaviour of children .....4 Discontinuation of children's education.....5 Deterioration of children's health.....6 Other (specify) 7</p>
Q. 16	<p>a. What is the main reason for your decision to work overseas?</p>	<p>Family obligation 1 Poverty .....2 Limited employment opportunities ...3 Husband didn't have a permanent job .....4 Desire to have social relations .....5 To earn money for children's education .....6 To build a house .....7 To live away from husband .....8 Other (specify) .....9</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>b. What are the other reasons?</p> <p>Interviewer Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Family obligation .....01 Poverty .....02 Limited employment opportunities ..03 Husband didn't have a permanent job .....04 Desire to have social relations .....05 To earn money for children's education .....06 To build a house .....07 To live away from husband .....08 Other (specify) .....09 No other reasons 10</p>
Q. 17	<p>a. Did you work anywhere in Sri Lanka before you started working overseas?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 18</p>
	<p>b. Where did you work?</p>	<p>Free Trade Zone.....1 Outside the Free Trade Zone 2 Go to (d)</p>
	<p>c. In which Free Trade Zone?</p>	<p>Katunayake Free Trade Zone 1 Biyagama Free Trade Zone .....2 Koggala Free Trade Zone .....2</p>
	<p>d. Why did you stop working there?</p> <p>Interviewer Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Wanted to go abroad..... 1 Salary was not enough.....2 Environment is not good to work .....3 Exploitation of labour .....4 No satisfaction .....5 Other (specify).....6</p>
	<p>e. Did the experience you obtained at your previous place of work motivate you to work overseas?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 18	Who was mainly responsible for making the decision for you to work overseas?	Myself..... 1 Husband 2 Children 3 Parents 4 Other relatives 5 Friends 6 Other (specify) 7
Q. 19	a. What was your monthly salary abroad last time ?	Rs. <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
	b. Did you send money to your family while you were abroad?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 21
	c. How often did you send money?	Once a month 1 Once in two months 2 Once in three months 3 Once in six months 4 Once a year 5 Other (specify) 6
	d. To whom did you send money? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses	Send to husband 1 Send to children 2 Send to parents 3 Send to relatives 4 Other (specify)..... 5
	e. For what purposes did your family members use the money you sent? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses	Day-to-day expenses 1 Education of children 2 To improve health of children 3 Housing 4 Other investment 5 Saving 6 Repay debts 7 Other (specify) 8

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions																					
	<p>Interviewer: If the answer for Q. 19 (d) is not equal to 1 (husband), ask Q. 19 (f). Otherwise, Go to Q. 20.</p> <p>f. Why didn't you send money to your husband?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>																					
<p>Q. 20</p>	<p>a. How much did you send last year to</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses and record the amount.</p>	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">Code</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Rs</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Bank.....</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Husband.....</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parents</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Repay debts</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total.....</td> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Code	Rs	Bank.....	1	Husband.....	2	Parents	3	Repay debts	4	Other	5	Total.....	6
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Total.....	6																					
<p>b. What is the mode of transaction?</p>	<p>Transferred to NRFC account 1</p> <p>Transferred to another account 2</p> <p>Bank draft 3</p> <p>Sent through relative/friend 4</p> <p>Other (specify) 5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Go to Q. 22</p>																						
<p>Q. 21</p>	<p>Why didn't you send money?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>																					
<p>Q. 22</p>	<p>a. Did you bring money with you when you returned to Sri Lanka last time?</p>	<p>Yes 1</p> <p>No 2 Go to Q. 23</p>																					
	<p>b. How much money did you bring?</p>	<p>Rs. <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p>																					

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 23	a. Were you able to save money from what you earned abroad?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 24
	b. What do you think about the amount of money you saved?	More than enough 1 Enough 2 Not enough 3
Q. 24	a. Were you able to do any useful investment with your money you earned abroad?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 25
	b. What is the nature of investment? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses	Contruccion work of the house 1 Improve the condition of the house ..2 Started a business .....3 Bought a vehicle .....4 Bought a land .....5 Bought jewellery .....6 Other (specify) .....7
Q. 25	In your opinion, what are the positive impacts of the money you earned abroad on your family? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses	Saved money .....01 Improvement in the condition of the house .....02 Starting a business .....03 Buying a vehicle .....04 Buying a land .....05 Buying household appliances .....06 Buying jewellery .....07 Improvement in the living condition .08 Improvement in child health .....09 Improvement in children's education 10 Other (specify) 11
Q. 26	In your opinion, what are the negative impacts of the money you earned abroad on your family? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses	Family dissolution 1 Husband started to drink .....2 Husband live with another lady 3 Husband started gambling .....4 Misbehaviour of children .....5 Chidren gave up education .....6 Ill health of children 7 Other (specify) .....8

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions																																																																																																		
Q. 27	How do you think about the increase in the household income as a result of your work overseas?	Highly increased 1 Moderately increased 2 Slowly increased..... 3 No increase at all 4																																																																																																		
Q. 28	In addition to money, what type of materials did you sent to your family when you were abroad? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses	Household items 1 Gift items 2 Jewellery 3 Mobile phones..... 4 Other (specify)..... 5 None..... 6																																																																																																		
Q. 29	What other materials do you have in your household? Interviewer: Record 1 or 2 for all the items that the household had/has before/ after migration. If 1 is circled for ‘before and after migration, and the condition the items improved, circle 1 for ‘Improved the condition’. Otherwise, circle 2.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th colspan="2">Before migration</th> <th colspan="2">After migration</th> <th colspan="2">Improved the condition</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>House</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Land</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Car</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Van</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Motor bice</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Tractor</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Computer</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Fridge</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Washing machine</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>TV</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Radio</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Other (specify).....</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Before migration		After migration		Improved the condition			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	House	1	2	1	2	1	2	Land	1	2	1	2	1	2	Car	1	2	1	2	1	2	Van	1	2	1	2	1	2	Motor bice	1	2	1	2	1	2	Tractor	1	2	1	2	1	2	Computer	1	2	1	2	1	2	Fridge	1	2	1	2	1	2	Washing machine	1	2	1	2	1	2	TV	1	2	1	2	1	2	Radio	1	2	1	2	1	2	Other (specify).....	1	2	1	2	1	2
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Q. 30	Compared to the time before you started working overseas, what do you think about the present conditions of your household?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Better good</th> <th>Fairly</th> <th>Worse</th> <th>No change</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Monetary</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>Housing</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>Living condition</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>Facilities</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>Child education</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>Child health</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Better good	Fairly	Worse	No change	Monetary	1	2	3	4	Housing	1	2	3	4	Living condition	1	2	3	4	Facilities	1	2	3	4	Child education	1	2	3	4	Child health	1	2	3	4																																																															
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Q. 31	a. Was there a plan regarding how money will be spent before your departure?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 32																																																																																																		

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>b. What items of expenditure were given priority in the plan?</p>	Save money..... 1 Building a house 2 Purchase a land 3 Repay debts..... 4 Educate children 5 Start a business 6 Other (specify) 7
	<p>c. How well is the plan being followed?</p>	Followed in full 1 Followed to some extent 2 Not followed at all 3
<p>Q. 32</p>	<p>a. In addition to the monetary and material benefits, what are the social advantages your family members received?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	..... ..... ..... ..... .....
	<p>b. In addition to the monetary and material benefits, what are the social disadvantages your family members received?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	..... ..... ..... ..... .....
<p>Q. 33</p>	<p>a. Before you start working overseas for the first time, did you have any fear of working in another country?</p>	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 34
	<p>b. What were the feelings you had?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	No skills to work 1 Lack of communication 2 Fear of abuse 3 No recognition in the society..... 4 Other (specify) 5

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>c. What are the feelings you have now?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	Skills improved 1 Improved communication skills..... 2 Recognition in the family 3 Recognition in the society 4 Possibility of working anywhere 5 No recognition in the society 6 Other (specify) 7
Q. 34	<p>a. While you were away from home, who was mainly responsible for spending money in the household?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	Husband 1 Mother/Father 2 Mother-in-law/Father-in-law 3 Brother/sister 4 Eldest child 5 Relative 6 Other (specify) 7
	<p>b. After you returned, who is mainly responsible for spending money in the household?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	Husband 1 Myself 2 Mother/Father 3 Mother-in-law/Father-in-law 4 Brother/sister 5 Eldest child 6 Relative 7 Other (specify) 8
Q. 35	<p>a. While you were away from home, who was mainly responsible for decision making in the household?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	Husband 1 Mother/Father 2 Mother-in-law/Father-in-law 3 Brother/sister 4 Eldest child 5 Relative 6 Other (specify) 7
	<p>b. After you returned, who was mainly responsible for decision making in the household?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	Husband 1 Myself 2 Mother/Father 3 Mother-in-law/Father-in-law 4 Brother/Sister 5 Eldest child 6 Relative 7 Other (specify) 8

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 36	a. While you were working overseas, did you face any kind of abuse?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 37
	b. What is the nature of abuse? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses	Verbal abuse 1 Physical abuse 2 Sexual abuse 3
	c. What is the impact of this problem on the relationship with your family? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses	Family disruption..... 1 Spoiled the children 2 No recognition from relatives 3 No recognition from society 4 No impact at all 5 Other (specify) 6
Q. 37	a. During the period you worked overseas, has anything happened in your family to spoil the relationship with you and your family members?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 38
	b. What are they? Interviewer: Record all responses	..... ..... .....
Q. 38	What are the new skills acquired in working overseas? Interviewer: Record all responses	..... ..... .....
Q. 39	a. Do you think that you achieved any personal development as a result of migration?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 40

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions																																			
	<p>b. Explain the personal developments you achieved.</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>																																			
<p>Q. 40</p>	<p>To what extent the experience gained through working overseas was helpful to the contribution of your ideas in the financial matters of the family?</p>	<p>Often 1</p> <p>Seldom 2</p> <p>Never 3</p>																																			
<p>Q. 41</p>	<p>What communication facilities does your family have?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record 1 or 2 for all the items that the household had/has before/ after migration.</p>	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th colspan="2">After</th> <th colspan="2">Before</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Land phone</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mobile phone</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E-mail</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>None of them</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other (specify)</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		After		Before			Yes	No	Yes	No	Land phone	1	2	1	2	Mobile phone	1	2	1	2	E-mail	1	2	1	2	None of them	1	2	1	2	Other (specify)	1	2	1	2
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None of them	1	2	1	2																																	
Other (specify)	1	2	1	2																																	
<p>Q. 42</p>	<p>a. When you were abroad, how did you communicate with your family members?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Air mail.....1</p> <p>Land phone2</p> <p>Mobile phone3</p> <p>E-mail4</p> <p>Other (specify)5</p> <p>No contact at all6 Go to Q. 44</p>																																			
	<p>b. How often did you contact them?</p>	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th></th> <th>Media</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Once a week</td> <td>.....1</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Once in a month</td> <td>.....2</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Once in three months</td> <td>.....3</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Once in six months</td> <td>.....4</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Seldom</td> <td>.....5</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Media	Once a week1	Once in a month2	Once in three months3	Once in six months4	Seldom5																	
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	<p>c. Who was the person you frequently contacted?</p>	<p>Husband 1</p> <p>Eldest child 2</p> <p>Other child 3</p> <p>Mother/Father 4</p> <p>Mother-in-law/Father-in-law 5</p> <p>Other(specify) 6</p>																																			

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions														
Q. 43	What are the matters you discussed with them most frequently ? Interviewer: Record all responses														
Q. 44	In your opinion, what are the advantages of your communication system? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses	Reduce distressing feelings (own)..... 1 Reduce distressing feelings (children) 2 Handle financial matters 3 Helped children's education 4 Advise on health issues of children ... 5 Avoid misbehaviour of husband..... 6 Other (specify) 7														
Q. 45	a. How many children do you have?	Girls <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Boys <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>														
	b. Interviewer: Record the number of children in each age group.	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Age</th> <th style="text-align: center;">No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Less than 1 year</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1-4 years</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5-9 years</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10-14 years</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15-19 years</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20+ years</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age	No	Less than 1 year	1	1-4 years	2	5-9 years	3	10-14 years	4	15-19 years	5	20+ years	6
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5-9 years	3															
10-14 years	4															
15-19 years	5															
20+ years	6															
c. Was there any impact of your migration on reducing the number of children?	Yes 1 No 2															
Q. 46	a. How many of your children are living in this household? Interviewer: If it is less than the total, ask Q. 46(b) Otherwise ask Q. 47	Number <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>														
	b. What are the reasons for the other children not living in this household? Interviewer: Record all responses														

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 47	<p>a. While you were overseas, who took care of your children?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Husband 01 Mother 02 Father 03 Mother-in-law 04 Father-in-law 05 Brother 06 Sister 07 Eldest daughter 08 Eldest son 09 Relative 10 Domestic servant 11 Other(specify) 12</p>
	<p>If the answer for Q. 47 (a) is not equal to 1, ask Q. 47 (b). Otherwise, Go to Q. 48.</p> <p>What are the reasons for not leaving them behind with father? </p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	
Q. 48	<p>a. How do you think about the ways of leaving of your children with care takers?</p> <p>Interviewer: If the answer is number 4, ask Q. 48 (b). Otherwise ask Q. 49.</p>	<p>Lived very happily 1 Lived moderately happily 2 Lived happily 3 Lived not happily at all 4</p>
	<p>b. Why were they not happy?</p> <p>Record all responses</p>	<p>..... </p>
Q. 49	<p>a. Did your children face any problem when you were working overseas?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 50</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>b. What are they?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
Q. 50	<p>a. Were your children happy with the material benefits they received?</p>	<p>Yes 1 Go to Q. 51</p> <p>No 2</p>
	<p>b. Why not?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
Q. 51	<p>Do you think that your children are happy with the material benefits they received than their emotional strains as a result of your absence?</p>	<p>Yes 1</p> <p>No 2</p>
Q. 52	<p>a. Did you discuss the problems your children had in your absence over the phone/by letters?</p>	<p>Yes 1</p> <p>No 2 Go to Q. 53</p>
	<p>b. What are the problems you discussed with them?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Educational matters .....1</p> <p>Health problems .....2</p> <p>Problems of loneliness .....3</p> <p>Problems of fathers .....4</p> <p>Problems of other care takers .....5</p> <p>Financial problems .....6</p> <p>Other (specify) .....7</p>
	<p>c. To what extent the discussions you had with your children helped to reduce the problems they had?</p>	<p>Helped immensely 1</p> <p>Helped moderately .....2</p> <p>Not helped at all .....3</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 53	<p>a. How did your earnings abroad affect your children's education?</p>	Positively affected 1 Negatively affected 2 Go to (c) No effect at all 3 Go to (d) No children of that age.. 4 Go to Q. 54
	<p>b. What are the positive effects? Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	..... ..... <p style="text-align: center;">Go to (d)</p>
	<p>c. What are the negative effects? Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	..... ..... .....
	<p>d. From whom did your children get support for their education at home? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	Husband .....01 Mother .....02 Father .....03 Mother-in-law .....04 Father-in-law .....05 Brother .....06 Sister .....07 Eldest daughter .....08 Eldest son.....09 Relative.....10 Other(specify).....11
Q. 54	<p>a. While you were away from home, did any of your children suffer from illnesses?</p>	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 55
	<p>b. What type of illnesses? Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	Physical illness 1 Mental illness 2
	<p>c. Do you think that it was an effect of your absence?</p>	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 55

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>d. Explain, why?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
Q. 55	<p>What changes have occurred in the family which affected children during your absence?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
Q. 56	<p>In your opinion, what are the changes of your children's behavioural pattern as a result of you work overseas?</p>	
	<p>a. Pre-school children (Less than 6 years of age)</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Weight loss 1</p> <p>Loss of appetite 2</p> <p>Temper tantrums 3</p> <p>Bad moods 4</p> <p>Disobedience 5</p> <p>Impairment of speaking ability..... 6</p> <p>Other (specify) 7</p> <p>Not relevant 8</p>
	<p>b. Children between 6-10 years of age</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Weight loss .....01</p> <p>Loss of appetite .....02</p> <p>Temper tantrums .....03</p> <p>Bad moods .....04</p> <p>Disobedience .....05</p> <p>Impairment of speaking ability.....06</p> <p>Low concentration .....07</p> <p>Lack of interest of attending school...08</p> <p>Dropping out from school.....09</p> <p>Low grades in school 10</p> <p>Isolation from other children 11</p> <p>Joining gangs and peer groups 12</p> <p>Other (specify) 13</p> <p>Not relevant..... 14</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>c. Children of age 10 years and over</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	Weight loss .....01 Loss of appetite .....02 Temper tantrums .....03 Bad moods .....04 Disobedience .....05 Impairment of speaking ability .....06 Low concentration .....07 Lack of interest of attending school...08 Dropping out from school.....09 Low grades in school .....10 Isolation from other children .....11 Joining gangs and peer groups .....12 Use of alcohol and drugs .....13 Sexual alliances .....14 Other (specify) .....15 Not relevant.....16
Q. 57	<p>a. Did your children face any kind of abuse during your absence?</p>	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 58
	<p>b. What is the nature of their abuse?</p>	Verbal abuse .....1 Physical abuse.....2 Sexual abuse .....3
	<p>c. Who was involved in the abuse?</p>	Father .....1 Brother/Sister .....2 Grand mother/Grand father .....3 Relative .....4 Domestic worker .....5 Neighbour .....6 Other (specify).....7
Q. 58	<p>In your opinion, what is the impact of your work overseas on your children's development?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	..... ..... .....

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 59	a. Did you face any problems in finding money to travel overseas?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 60
	b. How did you get money? Interviewer: Record all responses	..... ..... ..... .....
	c. How did you agree to pay money back? <input type="checkbox"/>
Q. 60	a. Did you find any problem other than money in preparing to travel overseas?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 61
	b. What are the problems you faced? Interviewer: Record all responses	..... ..... .....
	c. How did you solve the problems? Interviewer: Record all responses	..... ..... .....
Q. 61	a. Did you get any training to develop your skills to work overseas?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 62
	b. Who provided the training? <input type="checkbox"/>
	c. What do you think about your training?	Very useful 1 Moderately useful 2 Not useful 3

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 62	<p>a. Do you think that you need any training to perform your work efficiently overseas?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 63</p>
	<p>b. What sort of training do you need?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>.....</p>
Q. 63	<p>Explain how do you find your experience in working overseas is useful in your family life?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>.....</p>
Q. 64	<p>a. Do you have an idea to go to work overseas again?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 65</p>
	<p>b. How long would you expect to work overseas?</p>	<p>Years <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p>
	<p>c. What are the reasons that motivate you to go for overseas work again?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>.....</p>
Q. 65	<p>Who will take care of your children when you go abroad next time?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Husband 1 Mother/Father 2 Mother-in-law/Father-in-law 3 Brother/sister 4 Elderly children 5 Relative 6 Friend 7 Domestic worker 8 Other (specify) 9</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 66	a. Who will be assigned the responsibility of financial matters?	Husband 1 Go to Q. 67 Other (specify) 2
	b. What is the reason for not giving the responsibility to your husband?	..... ..... .....
Q. 67	a. Are there elderly persons in the household who needs your care?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 68
	b. Who will look after them?	Husband 1 Mother/Father 2 Mother-in-law/Father-in-law 3 Brother/sister 4 Eldest daughter/son 5 Relative 6 Friend 7 Domestic worker 8 Other (specify) 9
Q. 68	a. Would you like to work in Sri Lanka rather than going abroad?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to (c) Don't like to work 3 Go to (c)
	b. What kind of work would you like to do? Interviewer: Record all responses	..... ..... ..... Go to Q. 69
	c. What is the reason for that? Interviewer: Record all responses	...............

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 69	<p>a. Do you think that the support given by the family members for care taking of your children is adequate?</p>	<p>Yes 1 Go to Q. 70 No 2</p>
	<p>b. What sort of support do you expect?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... </p>
Q. 70	<p>a. Did your children get any kind of institutional support?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. (c)</p>
	<p>b. What is the nature of support?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... </p> <p style="text-align: center;">Go to Q. 71</p>
	<p>c. Do you expect any institutional support in care taking of your children?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 71</p>
	<p>d. What sort of institutional support do you expect?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... </p>
Q. 71	<p>a. Do you like to recommend any of your female family members/relatives/friends to work overseas?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to (c)</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>b. What are the reasons for recommending them to work overseas? Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... Go to Q. 72</p>
	<p>c. What are the reasons for not recommending them to work overseas? Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... </p>
<p>Q. 72</p>	<p>a. Do you have any idea about the decisions taken by the government last year and this year regarding the overseas migration of females who have children?</p>	<p>Yes .....1 No .....2 Go to Q. 73</p>
	<p>b. What are they? Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... </p>
	<p>c. What is your opinion about the decision of the government? Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... </p>
	<p>d. If you are allowed to express your opinion regarding this issue, what would you suggest? Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... </p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 73	From where did you first get information about working overseas? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses	Newspaper 1 Television 2 Radio 3 SLBFE 4 Friend 5 Relative 6 Other (specify) 7
Q. 75	a. Do you think that females need to work overseas?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to (c)
	b. Why do you think so? Interviewer: Record all responses	..... ..... ..... ..... <p style="text-align: center;">Go to Q. 75</p>
	b. What don't you think so? Interviewer: Record all responses	..... ..... ..... .....
Q. 75	Type of housing unit Interviewer: Record observation	Single unit 1 Storied unit 2 Annex 3 Flat 4 Slum 5 Other (specify) 6
Q. 76	What is the tenure of this house?	Own 1 Rent 2 Lease 3 Other (specify) 4

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 77	<p>a. Main material of the floor</p> <p>Interviewer: Record observation</p>	<p>Terrazo/Floor tile 1 Cement 2 Wood 3 Dung/Mud 4 Other (specify) 5</p>
	<p>b. Main material of the roof</p> <p>Interviewer: Record observation</p>	<p>Tile 1 Asbestos 2 Tin sheets 3 Cadjan..... 4 Waste material 5 Other (specify)..... 6</p>
	<p>c. Main material of the wall</p> <p>Interviewer: Record observation</p> <p>Thank the respondent and stop the interview</p>	<p>Brick/Cement/Stone/Cabook 1 Mud 2 Wood 3 Cadjan..... 4 Other (specify)..... 5</p>

APPENDIX IV

Serial number

All information collected at this survey will be treated as strictly confidential. Individual information will not be released.



Survey of the social and economic impacts of Sri Lankan female out-migration on families and children 2008

Questionnaire for the members of the families of female migrant
workers overseas

Survey of the social and economic impacts of Sri Lankan
female out-migration on families and children

Questionnaire for the members of the families of female migrant workers overseas

Identification	
District	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
DS Division	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
GN Division	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Sector (Urban/Rural)	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Household number	<input style="width: 20px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 20px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>

Date of interview Year Month

Name of the interviewer

Name of the editor

Address of the respondent

.....

.....

Household schedule

First, I would like to know some information about the members of your household

Line No. 1	Name Record the name of the head of the household first. List all the members living in this household including who are working abroad and away from home at the time of the survey. 2	Relationship to head of household 3	Sex 1. Male 2. Female 4	Age in years Age as at the last birth day 5	Ethnic Group 6	Religion 7	Marital Status 8	Education 9	Type of activity 1. Employed 2. Student 3. Other 10	Migration status 11			
										Non-migrant	Returned		Currently work abroad
											Before Jan 1998	After Jan 1998	
01										1	2	3	4
02										1	2	3	4
03										1	2	3	4
04										1	2	3	4
05										1	2	3	4
06										1	2	3	4
07										1	2	3	4
08										1	2	3	4
09										1	2	3	4
10										1	2	3	4
11										1	2	3	4
12										1	2	3	4
13										1	2	3	4
14										1	2	3	4

Codes: Relationship to head of household

01 - Head of household
02 - Husband/wife
03 - Son/daughter
04 - Son-in-law/daughter-in-law
05 - Grand son/grand daughter
06 - Parents
07 - Grand father/mother
08 - Brother/sister
09 - Other relative
10 - Other

Ethnic group

1 - Sinhalese.
2 - Tamil
3 - Sri Lanka Moor
4 - Burgher Malay
5 - Malay
6 - Other

Religion

1 - Buddhist
2 - Hindu
3 - Islam
4 - Roman Catholic
5 - Christian
6 - Other

Marital status

1 - Never married
2 - Currently married
3 - Divorced/Widowed
 Separated

Education

1 - Primary (Grades 1-5)
2 - Secondary (Grades 6-11)
3 - Tertiary (O.L./A.L.)
4 - Degree
5 - Other

IMPORTANT:

1. Interview a person lives in the household in the absence of the woman who has children and works overseas as a domestic worker but works more than a year.
2. Circle the line number of the eligible respondent

Individual information

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 1	Interviewer: Enter identification particulars from the household schedule.	
	a. District	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. D. S. Division	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. G. N. Division	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	d. Sector	<input type="checkbox"/>
	e. Household number	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	f. Respondent's line number	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Now, I would to know some information about the migrant woman and the household.		
Q. 2	What is the relationship of the female migrant worker to you?	Husband..... 1 Go to Q. 4 Mother..... 2 Mother-in-law..... 3 Sister..... 4 Sister-in-law..... 5 Other relative..... 6 Other (specify) 7
Q. 3	a. Were you living in this household before she migrated?	Yes 1 Go to Q. 4 No 2

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	b. What is the reason for moving to this household? <input type="checkbox"/>
Q. 4	a. Is there a difference between the persons currently living in the household and the persons who lived at the first time she migrated? Interviewer: Read the instruction manual.	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 5
	b. What is the difference? Interviewer: Record the response/all responses.	..... ..... ..... .....
	c. What are the reasons for the difference? Interviewer: Record the response/all responses.	..... ..... .....
Q. 5	a. Type of family (current) Interviewer: Decide according to the definition.	Nuclear family .....1 Extended family.....2
	b. Type of family (at the time of migration first time) Interviewer: Probe the interviewer and record.	Nuclear family .....1 Extended family.....2
Q. 6	a. What is her marital status?	Currently married.....1 Divorced .....2 Widowed.....3 Separated.....4

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>b. What is the marital status at the time she migrated first?</p> <p>Interviewer: If Q. 6(a) is not equal to 1 (If the respondent is not currently married), ask Q. 6(c). Otherwise, Go to Q. 7.</p>	Never married.....1 Married.....2 Divorced .....3 Widowed.....4 Separated.....5
	<p>c. What is reason for getting divorced/widowed/separated?</p>	Migration 1 Other (specify) 2 Don't know .....9
<p>Q. 7</p>	<p>a. Have you ever attended school?</p>	Yes.....1 No .....2 Go to Q. 8
	<p>b. What is the highest educational qualification you have?</p>	Primary (passed grades 1-5)..... 1 Secondary (passed grades 6-11)..... 2 G. C. E. O/L 3 G. C. E. A/L 4 Degree..... 5 Technical/vocational 6 Other (specify) 7
<p>Q. 8</p>	<p>a. How often do you read newspapers?</p>	Daily..... 1 Seldom 2 Never 3
	<p>b. How often do you watch television?</p>	Daily..... 1 Seldom 2 Never 3
	<p>c. How often do you listen to the radio?</p>	Daily..... 1 Seldom 2 Never 3

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
<p>Interviewer: If the respondent is female migrant worker's husband, ask Q. 9 If the respondent is a person other than her husband and the female migrant is currently married, Go to Q. 10 If the respondent is a person other than her husband and the female migrant is not currently married, Go to Q. 11</p>		
9	<p>a. Are you currently employed?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to (e)</p>
	<p>b. What is your occupation? Interviewer: Write the occupation clearly.</p>	<p>..... <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p>
	<p>c. What is the employment status?</p>	<p>Government 1 Semi government..... 2 Private..... 3 Other (specify)..... 4</p>
	<p>d. What is your monthly income?</p>	<p>Rs. <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Go to Q. 11</p>
	<p>e. What is the reason for not working? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Wife is working overseas 1 Thinks no jobs available 2 Have enough savings 3 Have to look after children 4 Other (specify) 5 Go to Q. 11</p>
10	<p>a. Is migrant's husband currently employed?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to (c)</p>
	<p>b. What is his occupation?</p>	<p>..... <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Go to Q. 11</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>c. What is the reason for not working?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Wife is working overseas 1 Thinks no jobs available 2 Have enough savings 3 Have look after children 4 Other (specify) 5 Don't know 9</p>
Q. 11	<p>a. Do you have sufficient income to support your family financially?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 12</p>
	<p>b. What is the monthly income of the household?</p>	<p>Rs. <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p>
	<p>c. What are the sources of income of the household?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Money earn by the migrant 1 Migrant's husband's income 2 Migrant's children's income 3 Parents' income 4 Other (specify) 5</p>
	<p>d. What is the main source of income?</p>	<p>Money earned by the migrant..... 1 Migrant's husband's income 2 Migrant's children's income..... 3 Parents' income 4 Other (specify)..... 5 Go to Q. 13</p>
Q. 12	<p>How do you get money for living expenses of the household?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all reasons</p>	<p>..... </p>
Q. 13	<p>a. Did your family have sufficient income to support the family financially before she migrated first time?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 14 Don't know 3 Go to Q. 14</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	b. What was the monthly income of the household before she migrated?	Rs. <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
	c. What was the main source of income ?	Money earned by the migrant 1 Husband's income 2 Children's income 3 Parents' income 4 Other (specify) 5 Don't know 9
Q. 14	When did she start working overseas for the first time ?	Year <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Don't know 9999
Q. 15	a. What is the nature of her current occupation?	Cooking 1 Taking care of children 2 Taking care of the aged 3 Cleaning 4 All the above work 5 Other (specify) 6 Don't know 9
	b. In which country does she work? <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
	c. What is the contract period?	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> years Don't know 99
	d. Did she work continuously up to now?	Yes 1 Go to Q. 16 No 2
	e. What is the reason for not working continuously? Interviewer: Record all reasons	..... .....
	f. How often did she visit Sri Lanka during the contract period?	Once in six months 1 Once in a year 2 Once in two years 3 Didn't come 4

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>g. What are the reasons for her visits? Interviewer: Record all reasons</p>	<p>..... </p>
<p>Q. 16</p>	<p>a. Did she work in another country before that?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 17</p>
	<p>b. In which country did she work?</p>	<p>..... <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>c. What is nature of her occupation there? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Cooking 1 Taking care of children..... 2 Taking care of the aged 3 Cleaning..... 4 All the above work 5 Other (specify)..... 6 Don't know 9</p>
<p>Q. 17</p>	<p>a. What is total number of years she worked overseas? Interviewer: If the answer is 5 years or more ask Q. 17 (b). Otherwise, ask Q. 18.</p>	<p>1 year 1 2 years..... 2 3 years..... 3 4 years..... 4 5 years..... 5 5 years or more 6 Don't know 9</p>
	<p>b. In your opinion, what are the advantages of working a longer period of time? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Saved enough money..... 01 Built a house 02 Improved the condition of the house. 03 Bought household appliances 04 Bought jewellery 05 Started a business 06 Bought a vehicle 07 Improved education of children..... 08 Improved health condition..... 09 Improved living condition 10 Other (specify) 11 Don't know 99</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>c. What are the disadvantages of working a longer period of time?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Marriage disruption 1 Husband used to take alcohol 2 Disruption of family relations 3 Misbehaviour of children 4 Discontinuation of children's education.. Deterioration of children's health..... 6 Other (specify) 7 Don't know 9</p>
Q. 18	<p>a. In your opinion, what is the main reason for her decision to work overseas?</p>	<p>Family obligation .....01 Poverty .....02 Limited employment opportunities ..03 Husband didn't have a permanent job 04 Desire to have social relations .....05 To earn money for children's education .....06 To build a house .....07 To live away from husband .....08 Other (specify) .....09 Don't know .....99</p>
	<p>b. What are the other reasons?</p> <p>Interviewer Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Family obligation .....01 Poverty .....02 Limited employment opportunities ..03 Husband didn't have a permanent job .....04 Desire to have social relations .....05 To earn money for children's education .....06 To build a house .....07 To live away from husband .....08 Other (specify) .....09 No other reasons.....10 Don't know .....99</p>
Q. 19	<p>a. Did she work anywhere in Sri Lanka before she started working overseas?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 20</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	b. Where did she work?	Free Trade Zone 1 Outside the Free Trade Zone 2 Go to (d)
	c. In which Free Trade Zone?	Katunayake Free Trade Zone 1 Biyagama Free Trade Zone 2 Koggala Free Trade Zone 2
	d. Why did she stop working there? Interviewer Circle the codes for all responses	Wanted to go abroad..... 1 Salary was not enough..... 2 Environment is not good to work 3 Exploitation of labour..... 4 No satisfaction 5 Other (specify)..... 6 Don't know 9
	e. In your opinion, did the experience she obtained there motivate her to work overseas?	Yes 1 No 2 Don't know 3
Q. 20	Who was mainly responsible for making the decision for her to work overseas?	Herself 1 Husband 2 Children 3 Parents 4 Other relatives 5 Friends 6 Other (specify) 7 Don't know 9
Q. 21	a. Do you know her monthly salary?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to (c)
	b. What is the monthly salary?	Rs. <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
	c. Does she send money to your family?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 23

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions																								
	<p>d. How often does she send money?</p>	Once a month 1 Once in two months 2 Once in three months 3 Once in six months 4 Once a year 5 Other (specify) 6																								
	<p>e. To whom does she send money?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	Send to husband 1 Send to children 2 Send to parents 3 Send to relatives 4 Other (specify)..... 8																								
	<p>f. For what purposes do your family members use the money she sent?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	Day-to-day expenses 1 Education of children 2 To improve health of children 3 Housing 4 Other investment 5 Saving 6 Repay debts 7 Other (specify) 8																								
	<p>Interviewer: If the answer for Q. 21 (e) is not equal to 1 (husband), ask Q. 21 (g). Otherwise, go to Q. 22.</p> <p>g. Why doesn't she send money to you/her husband?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>																								
<p>Q. 22</p>	<p>a. How much did she send last year to?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses and record the amount.</p>	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">Code</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Rs</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Bank.....</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Husband.....</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parents</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Repay debts</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total.....</td> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> <td style="text-align: center;">.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't know</td> <td style="text-align: center;">9</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Go to Q. 23</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Code	Rs	Bank.....	1	Husband.....	2	Parents	3	Repay debts	4	Other	5	Total.....	6	Don't know	9	Go to Q. 23
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No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>b. What is the mode of transaction?</p>	<p>Transferred to NRFC account 1 Transferred to another account 2 Bank draft 3 Sent through relative/friend 4 Other (specify) 5 Don't know 9 Go to Q. 24</p>
<p>Q. 23</p>	<p>Why didn't she send money?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... </p>
<p>Q. 24</p>	<p>a. Were your family members able to save money from what she sent?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 25 Don't know 3 Go to Q. 25</p>
	<p>b. What do you think about the amount of money saved?</p>	<p>More than enough 1 Enough 2 Not enough 3</p>
<p>Q. 25</p>	<p>a. Were your family members able to do any useful investment with the money she sent?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 26 Don't know 3 Go to Q. 26</p>
	<p>b. What is the nature of investment?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Construction work of the house 1 Improve the condition of the house .. 2 Started a business 3 Bought a vehicle 4 Bought a land 5 Bought jewellery 6 Other (specify) 7</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 26	<p>In your opinion, what are the positive impacts of the money she earns abroad on your family?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Improvement in the condition of the house 01 Starting a business 02 Buying a vehicle 03 Buying a land 04 Buying household appliances 05 Buying jewellery 06 Improvement in the living condition . 07 Improvement in the helath status of children 08 Improvement in the education of children's 09 Other (specify) 10</p>
Q. 27	<p>In your opinion, what are the negative impacts of the money she earns abroad on your family?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Family dissolution 1 Husband started to drink 2 Husband live with another lady 3 Husband started gambling 4 Misbehaviour of children 5 Chidren gave up education 6 Illhealth of children 7 Other (specify) 8</p>
Q. 28	<p>How do you think about the increase in the household income as a result of her work overseas?</p>	<p>Highly increased 1 Moderately increased 2 Slowly increased 3 No increase at all 4</p>
Q. 29	<p>In addition to money, what type of materials did she send to the family?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Household items 1 Gift items 2 Jwellary 3 Mobile phones..... 4 Other (specify)..... 5 None 6</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions																																																																																																									
Q. 30	<p>What other materials do your household own among the materials mention here?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record 1 or 2 for all the items that the household had/has before/ after migration.</p> <p>If 1 is circled for ‘before and after migration, and the condition the items improved, circle 1 for ‘Improved the condition’. Otherwise, circle 2.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th colspan="2">Before migration</th> <th colspan="2">After migration</th> <th colspan="2">Improved the condition</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>House</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Land</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Car</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Van</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Motor bice</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Tractor</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Computer</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Fridge</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Washing machine</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>TV</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Radio</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Other</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>(specify).....</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Before migration		After migration		Improved the condition			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	House	1	2	1	2	1	2	Land	1	2	1	2	1	2	Car	1	2	1	2	1	2	Van	1	2	1	2	1	2	Motor bice	1	2	1	2	1	2	Tractor	1	2	1	2	1	2	Computer	1	2	1	2	1	2	Fridge	1	2	1	2	1	2	Washing machine	1	2	1	2	1	2	TV	1	2	1	2	1	2	Radio	1	2	1	2	1	2	Other	1	2	1	2	1	2	(specify).....						
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Q. 31	<p>Compared to the time before she started working overseas, what do you think about the present conditions of your household?</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Better</th> <th>No change</th> <th>Worse</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Monetary</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>Housing</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>Living condition</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>Child development</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>Facilities</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Better	No change	Worse	Monetary	1	2	3	Housing	1	2	3	Living condition	1	2	3	Child development	1	2	3	Facilities	1	2	3																																																																																	
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Q. 32	<p>a. In your opinion, has she had a plan regarding how her money will be spent before she migrated?</p> <p>b. What items of expenditure were given priority in the plan?</p> <p>c. In your opinion, will she be able to follow the plan?</p>	<p>Yes 1</p> <p>No 2 Go to Q. 33</p> <p>Don't know 9 Go to Q. 33</p> <p>Building a house 1</p> <p>Purchase a land 2</p> <p>Repay debts 3</p> <p>Educate children 4</p> <p>Start abusiness 5</p> <p>Other (specify) 6</p> <p>Don't know 9</p> <p>Yes 1</p> <p>No 2</p> <p>Don't know 9</p>																																																																																																									

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 33	<p>a. In addition to the monetary and material benefits, what are the social advantages your family members receive? Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... </p>
	<p>b. In addition to the monetary and material benefits, what are the social disadvantages your family members receive? Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... </p>
Q. 34	<p>a. Who is mainly responsible for spending money in the household now? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Husband..... 1 Mother/Father 2 Mother-in-law/Father-in-law 3 Brother/sister 4 Eldest child 5 Relative..... 6 Other (specify)..... 7</p>
	<p>b. Who was mainly responsible for spending money in the household before she migrated? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Migrant woman 1 Husband..... 2 Mother/Father 3 Mother-in-law/Father-in-law 4 Brother/sister 5 Eldest child 6 Relative..... 7 Other (specify)..... 8 Don't know 9</p>
	<p>c. In your opinion, who will be mainly responsible for spending money in the household after her return? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Migrant woman 1 Husband..... 2 Mother/Father 3 Mother-in-law/Father-in-law 4 Brother/sister 5 Eldest child 6 Relative..... 7 Other (specify)..... 8 Don't know 9</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 35	<p>a. Who is mainly responsible for decision making in the household now?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	Husband 1 Mother/Father 2 Mother-in-law/Father-in-law 3 Brother/sister 4 Eldest child 5 Relative 6 Other (specify)..... 7
	<p>b. Who was mainly responsible for decision making in the household before she migrated?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	Migrant woman 1 Husband 2 Mother/Father 3 Mother-in-law/Father-in-law 4 Brother/sister 5 Eldest child 6 Relative 7 Other (specify)..... 8 Don't know 9
	<p>c. In your opinion, who will be mainly responsible for decision making in the household after her return?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	Migrant woman 1 Husband..... 2 Mother/Father 3 Mother-in-law/Father-in-law 4 Brother/Sister 5 Eldest child 6 Relative 7 Other (specify) 8 Don't know..... 9
Q. 36	<p>a. While she is working overseas, did she face any kind of abuse?</p>	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 37 Don't know..... 3 Go to Q. 37
	<p>b. What is the nature of abuse?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	Verbal abuse 1 Physical abuse 2 Sexual abuse 3
	<p>c. In your opinion, what is the impact of this problem on the relationship with her family?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	Family disruption 1 Spoiled the children 2 No recognition from relatives 3 No recognition from society 4 No impact at all 5 Other (specify) 6

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions																																			
Q. 37	In your opinion, what is the recognition in the society she as a female migrant worker? Interviewer: Record all responses																																			
Q. 38	In your opinion, what are the new skills that she can acquire in working overseas? Interviewer: Record all responses																																			
Q. 39	What are the communication facilities do your family have? Interviewer: Record 1 or 2 for all the items that the household had/has before/ after migration.	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th colspan="2">After</th> <th colspan="2">Before</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Land phone</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mobile phone</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E-mail</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>None of them</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other (specify)</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		After		Before			Yes	No	Yes	No	Land phone	1	2	1	2	Mobile phone	1	2	1	2	E-mail	1	2	1	2	None of them	1	2	1	2	Other (specify)	1	2	1	2
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None of them	1	2	1	2																																	
Other (specify)	1	2	1	2																																	
Q. 40	a. How does she communicate with your family members? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses	Air mail.....1 Land phone 2 Mobile phone.....3 E-mail4 Other (specify).....5 No contact at all.....6 Go to Q. 42																																			
	b. How often does she contact them?	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th></th> <th>Media</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Once a week</td> <td>.....1</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Once in a month</td> <td>.....2</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Once in three monthes</td> <td>.....3</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Once in six months</td> <td>.....4</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Seldom</td> <td>.....5</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Media	Once a week1	Once in a month2	Once in three monthes3	Once in six months4	Seldom5																	
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	c. Who is the person you/she frequently contacts?	Husband 1 Eldest child 2 Other child 3 Mother/Father 4 Mother-in-law/Father-in-law 5 Other(specify)..... 6																																			

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions														
Q. 41	What are the matters she discusses with them most frequently ?														
Q. 42	In your opinion, what are the advantages of her communication system? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses	Reduce distressing feelings (mother) 1 Reduce distressing feelings (children) 2 Handle financial matters 3 Helped children's education 4 Advise on health issues of children ... 5 Avoid misbehaviour of husband..... 6 Other (specify) 7														
Q. 43	a. How many children does she have?	Girls <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Boys <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>														
	b. Interviewer: Record the number of children in each age group.	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Age</th> <th style="text-align: center;">No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Less than 1 year</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1-4 years</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5-9 years</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10-14 years</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15-19 years</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20+ years</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age	No	Less than 1 year	1	1-4 years	2	5-9 years	3	10-14 years	4	15-19 years	5	20+ years	6
	Age	No														
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20+ years	6															
c. In your opinion, is there any impact of her migration on reducing the number of children?	Yes 1 No 2 Don't know 3															
Q. 44	a. How many of her children are living in this household? Interviewer: If it is less than the total, ask Q. 44 (b) Otherwise Go to Q. 45	Number <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>														
	b. What are the reasons the other children not living in this household? Interviewer: Record all responses														

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 45	<p>a. Who is mainly responsible for taking care of her children?</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	Husband 01 Mother 02 Father 03 Mother-in-law 04 Father-in-law 05 Brother 06 Sister 07 Eldest daughter 08 Eldest son 09 Relative 10 Domestic servant 11 Other(specify) 12
	<p>If the answer for Q. 45 is not equal to 1, ask Q. 45 (b). Otherwise, Go to Q. 46.</p> <p>b. What are the reasons for not leaving them behind with you/father?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	..... ..... .....
Q. 46	<p>a. What do you think about leaving her children with those who took care of them?</p> <p>Interviewer: If the answer is 1 or 2 or 3, ask Q. 46 (b). Otherwise ask Q. 47.</p>	Live very happily 1 Live moderately happily 2 Live happily 3 Live not happily at all 4
	<p>b. Why are they not happy?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	..... ..... .....
Q. 47	<p>a. Do they find any problem as a result of mother's work overseas?</p>	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 48

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>b. What are they?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
Q. 48	<p>a. Are they happy with the material benefits they receive?</p>	<p>Yes 1 Go to Q. 49</p> <p>No 2</p> <p>Don't know 9</p>
	<p>b. Why not?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
Q. 49	<p>Do you think that the children are happy with the material benefits they receive than their emotional strains in the absence of their mother?</p>	<p>Yes 1</p> <p>No 2</p> <p>Don't know 9</p>
Q. 50	<p>a. Does she discuss the problems with the children that they have over the phone ?</p>	<p>Yes 1</p> <p>No 2 Go to Q. 51</p> <p>Don't know 9 Go to Q. 51</p>
	<p>b. What are the problems she discusses with them?</p>	<p>Educational matters 1</p> <p>Health problems 2</p> <p>Problems of loneliness 3</p> <p>Problems of fathers 4</p> <p>Problems of other care takers 5</p> <p>Financial problems 6</p> <p>Other (specify) 7</p> <p>Don't know 9</p>
	<p>c. In your opinion, to what extent the discussions she has with her children helps to reduce the problems they had?</p>	<p>Helped immensely 1</p> <p>Helped moderately 2</p> <p>Not helped at all 3</p> <p>Don't know 9</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 51	<p>a. How did your earnings abroad affect your children's education?</p>	Positively affected 1 Negatively affected 2 Go to (c) No effect at all 3 Go to (d) No children of that age.. 4 Go to Q. 52
	<p>b. What are the positive effects?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	..... ..... ..... <p style="text-align: center;">Go to (d)</p>
	<p>c. What are the negative effects?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	..... ..... .....
	<p>d. From whom did her children get support for their education at home?</p>	Husband .....01 Mother .....02 Father .....03 Mother-in-law .....04 Father-in-law .....05 Brother .....06 Sister .....07 Eldest daughter .....08 Eldest son.....09 Relative 10 Other(specify)..... 11
Q. 52	<p>a. Did any of her children suffer from illnesses during this period?</p>	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 53
	<p>b. What type of illnesses?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	Physical illness 1 Mental illness 2

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>c. Do you think that it is an effect of her absence?</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 53</p>
	<p>d. Explain, why?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... </p>
<p>Q. 53</p>	<p>What changes have occurred in the family which affect children during her absence?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... </p>
<p>Q. 54</p>	<p>In your opinion, what are the changes of children's behavioural pattern as a result of their mothers' work overseas?</p>	
	<p>a. Pre-school children (Less than 6 years of age)</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	<p>Weight loss 1 Loss of appetite 2 Temper tantrums 3 Bad moods 4 Disobedience 5 Impairment of speaking ability..... 6 Other (specify) 7 Not relevant 8 Don't know 9</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>b. Children between 6-10 years of age</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	Weight loss .....01 Loss of appetite .....02 Temper tantrums .....03 Bad moods .....04 Disobedience .....05 Impairment of speaking ability .....06 Low concentration .....07 Lack of interest of attending school ..08 Dropping out from school.....09 Low grades in school 10 Isolation from other children 11 Joining gangs and peer groups 12 Other (specify) 13 Not relevant 14 Don't know 99
	<p>c. Children of age 10 years and over</p> <p>Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses</p>	Weight loss .....01 Loss of appetite .....02 Temper tantrums .....03 Bad moods .....04 Disobedience .....05 Impairment of speaking ability .....06 Low concentration .....07 Lack of interest of attending school ..08 Dropping out from school.....09 Low grades in school 10 Isolation from other children 11 Joining gangs and peer groups 12 Use of alcohol and drugs 13 Sexual alliances 14 Other (specify) 15 Not relevant 16 Don't know 99
Q. 55	<p>a. Did the children face any kind of abuse during mother's absence?</p>	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 56
	<p>b. What is the nature of abuse?</p>	Verbal abuse .....1 Physical abuse.....2 Sexual abuse .....3

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	c. Who was involved in the abuse?	Father 1 Brother/Sister 2 Grand mother/Grand father 3 Relative 4 Domestic worker 5 Neighbour 6 Other (specify)..... 7
Q. 56	In your opinion, what is the impact of her work overseas on children's development? Interviewer: Record all responses	..... ..... ..... .....
Q. 57	a. Did she get any training to develop her skills to work overseas?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 58 Don't know 3 Go to Q. 58
	b. Who provided the training? <input type="checkbox"/>
Q. 58	a. Are there elderly persons in the household who needs her care?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q. 59
	b. Who looks after them?	Husband 1 Mother/Father 2 Mother-in-law/Father-in-law 3 Brother/sister 4 Eldest daughter/son 5 Relative 6 Friend 7 Domestic worker 8 Other (specify) 9
Q. 59	a. In your opinion, does she like to work in Sri Lanka rather than going abroad?	Yes 1 No 2 Go to (c) Don't know 9 Go to (c)

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>b. What kind of work would she like to do?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Go to Q. 60</p>
	<p>c. Why?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Q.60</p>	<p>Do you think that the support given by the family members for care taking of your children is adequate?</p>	<p>Yes 1</p> <p>No 2</p>
<p>Q. 61</p>	<p>a. Do her children get any kind of institutional support?</p>	<p>Yes 1</p> <p>No 2 Go to Q. (c)</p>
	<p>b. What is the nature of support?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Go to Q. 62</p>
	<p>c. Do you expect any institutional support in care taking of her children?</p>	<p>Yes 1</p> <p>No 2 Go to Q. 62</p>
	<p>d. What sort of institutional support do you expect?</p> <p>Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Q. 62</p>	<p>a. Do you like to recommend any of your female family members/relatives/friends to work overseas?</p>	<p>Yes 1</p> <p>No 2 Go to (c)</p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
	<p>b. What are the reasons for recommending them to work overseas? Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... Go to Q. 63</p>
	<p>c. What are the reasons for not recommending them to work overseas? Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... </p>
<p>Q. 63</p>	<p>a. Do you have any idea about the decisions taken by the government last year and this year regarding the overseas migration of females who have children?</p>	<p>Yes .....1 No .....2 Go to Q. 64</p>
	<p>b. What are they? Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... </p>
	<p>c. What is your opinion about the decision of the government? Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... </p>
	<p>d. If you are allowed to express your opinion regarding this issue, what would you suggest? Interviewer: Record all responses</p>	<p>..... </p>

No	Questions and instructions to the Interviewer	Coding categories and skip instructions
Q. 64	From where did she first get information about working overseas? Interviewer: Circle the codes for all responses	Newspaper 1 Television 2 Radio 3 SLBFE 4 Friend 5 Relative 6 Other (specify) 7 Don't know 9
Q. 65	Type of housing unit Interviewer: Record observation	Single unit 1 Storied unit 2 Annex 3 Flat 4 Slum 5 Other (specify) 8
Q. 66	What is the tenure of this house?	Own 1 Rent 2 Lease 3 Other (specify) 4
Q. 67	a. Main material of the floor Interviewer: Record observation	Terrazzo/Floor tile 1 Cement 2 Wood 3 Dung/Mud 4 Other (specify) 5
	b. Main material of the roof Interviewer: Record observation	Tile 1 Asbestos 2 Tin sheets 3 Cadjan 4 Waste material 5 Other (specify) 6
	c. Main material of the wall Interviewer: Record observation Thank the respondent and stop the interview	Brick/Cement/Stone/Cabook 1 Mud 2 Wood 3 Cadjan 4 Other (specify) 5

APPENDIX V

Instructions to fill out the questionnaires for migrants

1. General instructions:

- How to find respondents
- Self instruction to the respondent
- Explaining the important of the study to the respondents
- Explain the Information Sheet if needs further explanation
- Starting the interviews
- How to tackle the respondents if problem arises
- Leaving the interview

2. Special instructions: to complete the questionnaire

Important:

Interview only the **returned female domestic migrant workers** who have children and returned to Sri Lanka after January 1998 but, worked overseas more than a year.

When you identify a household with a female domestic migrant worker, first, check with them whether the migrant has children, returned after January 1998 and worked overseas more than a year.

Identification particulars

Write the names of the District, D. S. Division, G. N. Division and Sector and enter the codes obtained from the code list. Leave the household number blank.

Household schedule

Column 2: Name

Record the names of all persons living in the **household** including those who are working abroad and away from home at the time of the survey. Record the name of the head of the household first. Do not include the names of married children live as a separate family.

Definition of Household:

A group of persons live together and have common arrangements for provision of food. Household includes not only members of the family such as husband, wife and children but also others such as relatives, domestic servants etc. who live with the family and share the same common arrangements for cooking and partaking of food with them.

Column 3: Relationship to head of household

Enter relevant code to indicate the relationship of the person to head of household using the codes given below the schedule.

Column 4: Sex

Enter code 1 or 2 appropriately.

Column 5: Age

Try to obtain accurate age in completed years as at last birth day.

Column 6: Ethnic group, Religion, Marital status and Education

Enter relevant code for these columns using the codes given below the schedule.

Column 7: Type of activity

Enter code 1 or 2 or 3 appropriately for every person to indicate 'type of activity'.

Column 8: Migration status

It is important to identify the migration status of all the persons in the household as at the time of the survey. Circle code 1 for all non-migrants, 2 for migrants returned before January 1998, 3 for migrants returned after January 1998 and 4 for migrants currently work abroad.

Column 1: Line number

Circle the line number for eligible respondent. If there are more than one eligible respondent in the household, interview only one women and circle the number for the respondent that you are going to fill the individual schedule.

Eligible respondent:

If for any women columns 4 = 2 (Female) and 8 = 2 (Currently married or 3 Divorced/widowed/separated) and 11 = 3 (Returned after January 1998 but, worked overseas more than a year), she is eligible for an interview.

Individual schedule

Q. 1 Fill this information after completing the questionnaire but, before interviewing

the next respondent. Obtain the codes for sections (a) to (d) from identification particulars.

Leave the household number blank.

Line number: This is the number circled for the eligible respondent in column 1 of the household schedule. Entering the correct line number is important to match the information of the respondent in the individual schedule with the household schedule.

Q. 2 It is important to identify the difference between the persons currently live and persons lived in the household at the time the respondent migrated first time. Reason for asking this question is to identify the changes in the family structure as a result of migration. Sometimes number of persons lived at the time of her migration and currently live may be equal but the persons may be different.

Eg. Husband of the respondent started living with another woman in another household as a result of her migration instead, a relative joined the family to look after children.

If you identify such a difference for example, it is important to identify the nature of difference and record the reason or reasons for that difference clearly in section (b) and (c).

- Q. 3** Identify the type of family at the time of interview and at the time of migration according to the following definitions:

Nuclear family

This is defined as the marital pair living with their offspring in a separate dwelling

Extended family

This is defined as ‘the relatives of an individual, both by blood and by marriage, other than its immediate family, such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, and cousins’.

- Q. 4** Main purpose of this question is to identify the issues related to marital disruption due to migration. Therefore, ask the marital status at the time she first migrated. If the respondent is not currently married, identify the marital status and the reason for not currently being married.
- Q. 5** For section (a), circle 1 or 2 appropriately.

For section (b), circle the appropriate code according to the highest educational qualification she has.

- Q. 6** This question is asked to know the frequency of reading newspapers, watching TV and listening to radio before and after migration. Therefore, it is necessary to circle 1 or 2 for each category ‘Regularly, Seldom and Never’ appropriately.
- Q. 7** This question has to be asked from all the respondents whether they are currently married or not. Ask section (a) according the current marital status of the respondent.

If husband is employed, write the occupation in section (b) clearly as she reports. Write monthly income in section (c) if she knows, otherwise, circle 99999. Circle the code for employment status in section (d). If husband is not employed, ask the reason and write it clearly in section (e).

- Q. 8** This question is about the **respondent’s current employment and her income**. If she is currently employed, write the occupation clearly. Try to get the correct monthly income as the respondents may sometimes not be reluctant to give the precise income. If the respondent reports more than one reason circle the codes for all reasons in section (d),.

- Q. 9** This question is about the monthly income of the household to support the family after her return. If the respondent has sufficient income to support the family financially, ask the source of income. If she reports more than one source, circle the codes for all sources in section (c) and circle the code for the **main source** in section (d).
- Q. 10** Ask this question from the respondents who reported that they don't have enough income to support the family in section (a) of Q. 9 and record all responses clearly.
- Q. 11** This question is about the **monthly income of the household before she migrated the first time**. Try to obtain accurate monthly income and circle the code for the **main source of income**.
- Q. 12** Enter the year that the respondent started to work overseas the **first time**.
- Q. 13** This question is about the nature of work overseas, country of work, contract period, period of work during the contract period, reasons if not worked during the contract period, number of visits to Sri Lanka during the contract period and the reasons for visits when she worked **last time**.
- Q. 14** If the respondent worked in any other country other than the country she worked last time, write the country she worked and circle the codes for the nature of work.
- Q. 15** This question is about the total number of years she worked overseas from the time she started working for the first time. If she didn't work continuously try to count only the period she worked.
- If the total period is more than 5 years, ask the advantages and disadvantages of working overseas and circle the codes for all responses.
- Q. 16** **Main reason** for working overseas is asked in section (a) of this question and section (b) is for other reasons.
- Q. 17** It is important to identify the relationship between internal and international migration. If the respondent worked in Free Trade Zone, ask the zone and other questions accordingly.
- Q. 18** Circle the code for the person **mainly responsible** for her migration.
- Q. 19** Sections (a) to (e) of this question are about the monthly income when she worked **last time** and frequency of sending money, the person that she sent money and the ways in which the family members use the money that she sent.

It is also important to know whether she sent money to her husband. If not, try to get the correct information about the reasons for not sending money to her husband and write the reasons in section (f).

- Q. 20** Sometimes it may be difficult to get correct information for this question. Ask the question by reading each mode of transaction. For each transaction which she sent money, circle the code and write the amount.
- Q. 21** This question has to be asked only from the respondents who reported that they didn't sent money to the family i. e. code 2 is circled for Q. 19 (b).
- Q. 22** This question is about the money she brought when she returned to Sri Lanka **last time**. Try to obtain the accurate information as possible as you can.
- Q. 23 & Q. 24** These questions are about the amount of money she saved and the nature of investments.
- Q. 25 & Q. 26** These two questions are about the positive and negative impacts of migration. Circle codes for all responses.
- Q. 27** Impact of migration on income of the family is asked in this question.
- Q. 26** Circle all the codes for all non-monetary items she sent.
- Q. 29** By reading the name of each item listed, ask the respondent about the availability of each item before and after migration and circle 1 or 2 to indicate the availability. **If code 1 is circled for any item for both before and after migration**, check whether the quality is improved for that item by circling the code 1 or 2.
- Q. 30** This question is about the current situation of money, housing, living condition, child development and facilities of the household. Circle 1 or 2 or 3 for each item.
- Q. 31** If the respondent had a plan about the future expenses, ask about the plan and the achievement of the plan.

So far, you collected information about the household, background of the respondent, migration and economic condition of the household before and after migration.

Now, you need to collect some information about the social condition of the household before and after migration.

- Q. 32** One of the objectives of this survey is to investigate the social impacts of migration on families and children. Therefore, ask the respondents about the social advantages and disadvantages of migration on their families. If she doesn't understand the question, explain.
- Q. 33** This question is about the feelings on migration that the respondent had before the migration and the current situation. Circle the codes for all responses.
- Q. 34 & 35** These questions are about the spending pattern and decision making of the household before and after migration.

- Q. 36** If the respondent had to face any kind of abuse during the time she worked overseas, ask the nature of abuse and the effect of the abuse on the relationship of the respondent with the family.
- Q. 37, Q. 38, Q. 39 & Q. 40** Incidences occurred to spoil the relation between you and the family members, skills acquired and personal development achieved as a result of migration, and contribution of experiences in working overseas in handling financial matters in the household are asked in these questions.
- Q. 41, Q. 42, Q. 43 & Q. 44** These questions are about the communication facilities that the household has, the ways and frequency of communication that the respondent had with family members, frequently contacted persons, matters discussed and the advantages of communication.

When recording the frequency of communication in Q. 42 (b), enter the code for relevant communication media obtained from Q 42 (a) in the given space.

From here onwards, questions are asked about children of the migrant and especially the impact of her migration on children.

- Q. 45** This question is about the total number of children she has. In section (a), write the number of children by sex. In section (b), write the number of children by age group and circle the relevant code. Section (c) is important in identifying the effect of migration on deciding the number of children.
- Q. 46** It is important to identify whether there is an impact of mother's migration on the number of children living in the household. Therefore, ask clearly the number of children currently live in the household and check that number with the number children recorded in Q. 45 (a). If you find a difference, ask clearly the reasons for the difference.
- Eg.** If it is a marriage, ask clearly the nature of marriage.
- Q. 47** Ask about the persons responsible for child care in section (a). If the father of children didn't look after them, ask the reasons and write them clearly in section (b).
- Q. 48 & Q. 49** These two questions are about the happiness of children with their caretakers and the problems faced in the absence of mother.
- Q. 50 & Q. 51** These two questions are about the material benefits the children received and their emotional strains.
- Q. 52** Communication with children over the phone and by letters, problems they discussed and how those discussions helped to solve the problems are asked by this question.
- Q. 53, Q. 54 & Q. 55** Impact of migration of mother on children's education and health are asked in these questions.

- Q. 56** This question about the changes occurred in the family which affected children.
- Q. 57** Ask the behavioural changes of children occurred as a result of mother's migration for children less than 6 years of age, children of age between 6-10 years and children of age 10 years and over. Circle the codes for all responses.
- Q. 58** This question about child abuse in the absence of mother. Sometimes the respondents will try not to disclose the real situation. In such situations, it is necessary to probe and get accurate information.
- Q. 59** Ask the impact of migration on child's development.
- Q. 60, Q. 61, Q. 62, Q. 63 & Q. 64** These questions are about the financial and other problems she had before she migrated, how did she solve the problems, training received to improve skill development, further training required and how the experience she received abroad was helpful in family matters.
- Q. 65, Q. 66, Q. 67 & Q. 68** If the respondent reports that she needs to go abroad for work again, ask the reasons, responsible persons for child care, responsible person for financial matters and responsible persons for elderly care.
- Q. 69** Ask the willingness of migrant and the reasons to work in Sri Lanka rather than going abroad.
- Q. 70** This question is about the family support in taking care of children.
- Q. 71** It is important to know the institutional support that the children of migrants received, nature of support and the required support in the future.
- Q. 72** Whether the respondent likes to encourage other females to go abroad for work is asked in this question.
- Q. 73** This question is asked to examine the knowledge of respondents regarding the decisions of the government, their views on those decisions and their suggestions.
- Q. 74** This question is asked to know the source of information of working overseas.
- Q. 75** This question is about the opinion of the respondent regarding the migration of women for work overseas.
- Q. 76** Observe the structure of the unit and circle the appropriate code.
- Q. 77** Circle the appropriate code.