



URBAN-WARD MIGRATION AND SOCIAL VULNERABILITY: RESEARCH EVIDENCE BASED ON GAMPAHA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

In the past decades, literature on urban-ward migration emphasize that urban migration has been played a vital role to increase the urban population and make imbalances of the urban livelihoods. With the introduction of open economic system, Gampaha district of the Western Province has become a second popular urban migration destination due to establishment of industries. Although many studies in local context have focused on reasons of urban-ward migration and positive consequences of migration, there is lack of research on social vulnerabilities among urban migrants. Hence, this study intended to investigate the reasons of urban-ward migration and nature of social vulnerability issues faced by the urban migrants in the highly urbanized areas. The study is based on qualitative and quantitative data collected from selected urban communities in Gampaha district. Data were obtained from a sample survey using an interviewer administered questionnaire covering 400 migrants. Descriptive analysis was used to identify the characteristics of migrants and describe the reasons for urban-ward migration while content analysis was applied to identify the social vulnerability issues of urban migrants at the urban destination. Findings revealed that the male headed household proportion was higher than their female counterparts. More than two thirds of male headed households were represented in reproductive age group. Around 60% of respondents have secondary or below secondary level education. Graduate and above level educated migrant people would not like to live in the highly urbanized areas. Within the last fifteen years, urban to urban migration (59.7%) was higher than the rural to urban migration. According the quantitative data, rural to urban migrants are less likely to face economic vulnerabilities at the beginning than the urban to urban migrants. Most migrant families have migrated to urban locations for seeking employment opportunities in the Export Trade Zones' and the Airport. However, more than 50% migrants have re-migration intension due to social vulnerabilities. Qualitative findings explored that poor economic background, high cost of living, less social contacts among migrants and the natives, illegal drug abuses, violence and environmental pollutions have increased gradually. These findings suggest that improving living facilities, decentralization of public services and human capital utilization at rural and sub-urban areas reduce the urban-ward migration.

Keywords: Urban migration, Reason, Vulnerabilities, Analysis