

**INTERNATIONAL CONTRACT LABOUR MIGRATION AND
CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND IN SRI LANKA: THE IMPACT ON
CHILDREN'S EDUCATION**



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INTERNATIONAL CONTRACT LABOUR MIGRATION AND CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND IN SRI LANKA: THE IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S EDUCATION**E. L. SUNETHRA J. PERERA 4938561 PRDE/D****Ph.D. (DEMOGRAPHY)****THESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE: AREE JAMPAKLAY, Ph.D., ROSALIA SCIORTINO, Ph.D., AREE PROHMMO, Ph.D.****ABSTRACT**

This study explores how parental transnational labour migration impacts on education of children left behind in Sri Lanka. The study uses mixed methodology by employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative analysis examines the extent to which parental migration is associated with children's school enrolment, while the qualitative analysis explores why those relationships exist and how remittances and other individual, household and community factors affect both school enrolment and quality of education. The study utilizes data from the Sri Lanka Population and Housing Census, 2001 and qualitative research in-depth interview information collected in 2008 in Kalutara district in Sri Lanka.

The unit of analysis is the child. The population average model (or GEE) is employed. The results from binary logistic regression estimates and qualitative content analyses reveal that parental migration has a positive impact on children's school enrolment compared to children of non-migrants. The social cost of the mother's or father's migration is outweighed by the remittances. The father's migration for overseas has a larger positive influence on a child's enrolment at school than the mother's overseas migration. Migrant remittances have a significant positive impact on economic well being and investment on children's education. The mother's migration has a greater positive impact in the case of a poorer child continuing at school while a father's migration enhances both enrolment and the quality of education. In addition, extended family support, kinship relations, parents' communication with children and children's participation in community activities make significant positive contributions to children's education while a spouse's misbehaviour, a caregiver's low education, and weak social and kin supports bring negative impacts.

The findings make policy makers look at parental migration in a more positive light and re-think the policy of banning mothers from migrating. National level programmes on social protection systems for children left behind and counselling program for spouses and care givers left behind, also need to be developed to cope with the negative impacts.

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