

## **Determinants of employment participation of urban migrant women in the Kalutara District**

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More women than men migrate internally in Sri Lanka, the majority of female migrants migrating to the urban areas of the Western Province either due to the availability of female-oriented job opportunities in industrial, commercial, and service sectors, or for marriage- and family-related reasons. However, there is a lack of research on employment participation and its determinants with respect to women who have migrated. This paper investigates the status of migrant women's employment participation and its determinants, taking the Kalutara District as a case study. Migrant households were selected from 3 Urban Council areas using the simple random sampling method. The sample size was 582 urban migrant women (aged 18-59). Data were gathered through an interviewer administered questionnaire from April to June, 2014. The results related to the demographic and socio-economic determinants of the employment participation of women were presented based on descriptive and logistic regression analyses. Results based on descriptive analysis revealed that the mean age of migrant women was 36.4 years and that only about 30% of migrant women were employed. More than half of migrant women of the sample (59.0%) were Sinhalese, while Tamils and Moors were 7.0 % and 34.0 % respectively. Employment participation was higher among Sinhalese and Tamil migrant women (35% each) compared to Moors (21.4%). More than half of the women had an educational level of G.C.E. O/L or below and more educated women (G.C.E. A/L and above) were employed compared to those with a lower level of education. More than half of the unemployed women would like to engage in home-based self-employment. The logistic regression results revealed that marital status, level of education, household size, ethnicity, and household dependency status were significant predictors of employment participation of urban migrant women. These findings suggest that policies and programmes should focus on skill development and facilitate self-employment activities to improve the employability of urban migrant women.

**Keywords:** *women's employment, urban migrant women, migrants' employability*