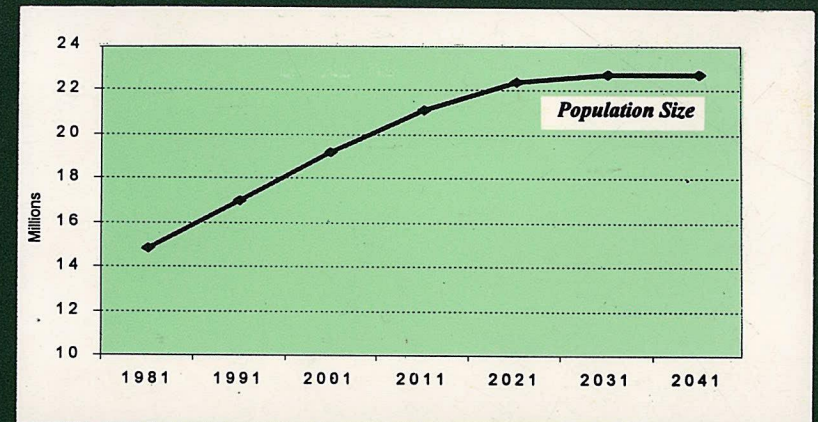


Demography of Sri Lanka

Issues and Challenges



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Demography of Sri Lanka Issues and Challenges

A publication to mark twenty five years
of the establishment of
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How Popular is the Western Province among the Migrants in Sri Lanka

Sunethra Perera
Swarna Ukwatta

Introduction

Since independence the large number of industrial and commercial and other service centres that have been established in the Western Province of Sri Lanka, have generated a massive demand for jobs and created opportunities for people to migrate into the Western Province, especially to Colombo and Gampaha districts. This migratory process has resulted in a high concentration of population in the urban areas of the Western Province, causing an increase of urban oriented problems such as high population density, unsanitary housing, violence and pollution.

Most studies using data collected by various censuses of population on internal migration in Sri Lanka have established that, Colombo district has the largest proportion of in-migrants in all intercensal periods (Vamathevan, 1960; Abhayaratne and Jayawardena, 1965; Wilson, 1976). In the recent past, the rapidly growing Investment Promotion Zones (Free Trade Zones) have also attracted a considerable number of migrants to Colombo and Gampaha districts. This has resulted in a further increase in the high concentration of population in the Western province (De Silva, 1995).

Several researchers have done studies on internal migration using 1981 census data, since then there have been no studies on internal migration because a census of population & housing has not been conducted in Sri Lanka since the 1981 Census. This study is an attempt to examine internal migration patterns and trends in the Western Province of Sri Lanka using data from the 1994 Demographic Survey. An analysis of migration patterns of the Western Province would be more important for socio-economic planning, and for relevant policy formulation and implementation.

Data, Limitations, Assumptions & Methodology

The main source of data for this study is the 1994 Demographic Survey. This Survey covered about 100,000 households excluding Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka. Apart from the published tables on migration, a number of special tabulations

indicating migratory patterns of the Western Province have been derived from the 1994 Demographic Survey data. This survey collected information on migration along with the demographic information. Therefore, over enumeration or under enumeration of migration could have occurred. Since this Survey excluded Northern and Eastern provinces, in/out migration to/from these provinces cannot be identified. Prevailing civil disturbances of Northern and Eastern part of the country has been a push factor to move people out of the provinces to safer districts. The possibility of migration to these provinces may be very insignificant in numbers. Therefore, the study assumed that these two provinces are not attractive for people to live in and therefore, there was no significant in-migration to these districts from other districts of the country. The study further assumed that in 1994, all districts of Northern and Eastern Provinces experienced only net out-migration.

The Place of Birth Method (POB Method) using data on place of birth and place of usual residence was applied to estimate lifetime migration. Migrants were identified at the following two levels of migration,

- (a) Migrants in each district in the Western Province, (Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara) when comparing with the migrants of rest of Sri Lanka.
- (b) Migrants who moved only within the districts of Colombo, Gampaha, and Kalutara.

Internal Migration Patterns in Sri Lanka, 1981 and 1994

As at 1988, the Western Province comprised of 3,593 square kilometers constituting the smallest province in land area in Sri Lanka, when compared to the land extent of other provinces. Population density is high in all three districts of Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara of the Western Province. According to the 1994 Demographic Survey, 31 per cent of the total population of Sri Lanka was concentrated in this province.

Table 1 indicates the net migration rates for Sri Lanka classified by district. The two districts of Colombo and Gampaha in the Western Province have been the most popular migration destinations during the period 1981-1994. These two districts consisted of the largest resident population, comprising one fourth of the total population in Sri Lanka. The rates presented in the Table 1 show a significant increasing trend of net in-migration during the period 1981 to

1994. The rate of net migration (5.0 per cent) reported for Colombo district had more than doubled (11.2 per cent) by 1994.

Table 1 Net migration rates for Sri Lanka, 1981 and 1994

District	1981	1994
Colombo	5.0	11.2
Gampaha	8.8	12.1
Kalutara	-4.3	-1.9
Kandy	-17.1	-12.7
Matale	-4.3	-1.1
Nuwara Eliya	-4.0	-5.5
Galle	-14.8	-11.1
Matara	-20.8	-20.2
Hambantota	-0.2	-2.0
Jaffna	-6.4	n.a.
Mannar	16.6	n.a.
Vavuniya	30.5	n.a.
Mullaitivu	37.7	n.a.
Batticaloa	-0.5	n.a.
Ampara	13.2	n.a.
Trincomalee	17.5	n.a.
Kurunagala	-2.0	-2.3
Puttalam	8.3	9.2
Anuradhapura	20.4	15.4
Polonnaruwa	44.6	35.0
Badulla	-6.7	-4.0
Moneragala	25.8	18.5
Ratnapura	1.6	-0.7
Kegalle	-14.7	-9.9

Source: 1981 data are from the 1981 General Report, Dept. of Census & Statistics.
1994 Demographic Survey, (foreign born excluded)
n.a.: not available

In 1981 the highest rate of net out-migration was recorded for Matara district while Kandy, Matale, Nuwara Eliya and Kegalle also reported high net out-migration rates. The situation did not change significantly during the period 1981 to 1994.

As at 1994, a dominant pattern of in-migration to Colombo district, from the wet zone districts of Kalutara, Galle, Matara and Kandy could be clearly identified. Only a single significant long distance migration flow from Jaffna to Colombo could be identified. This trend establishes the fact that not only did Colombo receive a large volume of migrants but also sent migrants to other districts. Net in-migration rate appears to be the highest in Polonnaruwa district for both years 1981 and 1994. Moneragala and Anuradhapura districts reported second and third highest rates of net in-migration respectively. Nevertheless, these three districts showed a decreasing trend of in-migrant attraction during the period under investigation.

Due to the fact that the 1994 Demographic Survey had not collected data from Northern and Eastern Provinces, the patterns of internal migration from rest of the island to these two provinces cannot be examined. Nevertheless, all the districts excluding Jaffna and Batticaloa of the Northern and Eastern Provinces had indicated a significantly high rate of net in-migration in 1981. These districts are no more attractive for people to live in; they push their resident population to other provinces due to civil disturbances in those parts of the country. Given the current situation it could be surmised that these seven districts would report a net out-migration trend which would be totally in opposite to the pattern observed in the 1981 Census.

Patterns of Inter-District Migration Within the Western Province, 1994

Colombo District

Analysis of 1994 Demographic Survey data on migration show that about 15 per cent of the total population of Sri Lanka are lifetime inter-district migrants. Out of this total lifetime migrants, 42 per cent were concentrated in all three districts of the Western Province, and within the Western Province, Colombo district had the highest concentration of lifetime migrants.

The broad patterns of net lifetime migration streams of Colombo district are shown in Table 2. Three major in-migration flows to Colombo district can be identified. The first is the largest net volume of migrants from districts of Southern part of the country; second net volume from the hill country districts and third stream from the Northern part, especially from the Jaffna district. In addition, smaller streams of net out-migration from Colombo to Gampaha, Puttalam, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Moneragala districts, could be identified.

Table 2 Net lifetime migration streams of Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara districts, 1994

	Colombo	Gampaha	Kalutara
Colombo	-	69,215	-22,993
Gampaha	-69,215	-	-7,572
Kalutara	22,993	7,572	-
Kandy	33,297	20,708	17,52
Matale	5,605	2,903	-212
Nuwara Eliya	18,319	8,394	1,233
Galle	52,167	22,970	1,774
Matara	55,230	20,562	5,826
Hambantota	9,248	4,792	1,070
Jaffna	42,325	6,081	1,223
Mannar	1,770	520	41
Vavuniya	1,165	846	160
Mullaitivu	1,118	395	-
Kilinochchi	866	160	-
Trincomalee	3,796	3,823	853
Batticaloa	5,400	646	455
Ampara	2,974	1,474	861
Knurunegala	5,479	12,646	-1,006
Puttalam	-3,474	-956	-2,298
Anuradhapura	-2,120	-2,257	-2,052
Polonnaruwa	-1,231	-4,178	-4,665
Badulla	14,618	7,910	-232
Moneragala	-540	-195	-2,941
Ratnapura	15,194	9,117	-3,168
Kegalle	14,509	13,006	-2,562

Source: 1994 Demographic Survey

The overall net lifetime migration to Colombo district in 1994 originated mainly from the densely populated wet zone districts of Kalutara, Galle, Matara and Kandy. There is only one significant long distance net in-migration flow; that is from Jaffna to Colombo.

Total number of out-migrants from Colombo district amounted to 264,461 constituting the largest volume when compared to the volume of out-migrants from the other two districts. Sixty five per cent of them were from the three districts of Gampaha, Kalutara and Kandy. About 60 per cent of out-migrants from Colombo district went to the other two districts of the Western Province.

Gampaha District

The net lifetime migration patterns of Gampaha district in 1994 are shown in Table 2. The largest volume of net lifetime migration flow to Gampaha district was from the Southern part of the country. The second largest was the hill country and the third from the Jaffna district. In addition to these net in-migration flows, there was another significant net in-migration flow from Kurunagala to Gampaha. Apart from the major net in-migration patterns, a few net out-migration streams from Gampaha to Puttalam, Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa districts could be observed. The second highest volume of in-migration within the Western Province is reported from Gampaha district (352,725) as shown in the Table 3. More than half of the in-migrants are attracted from the three nearby districts of Colombo, Kurunagala and Kandy.

The total out-migration from Gampaha district is reported as 146,566 persons. Districts of destination were Colombo, Kurunagala and Puttalam (Table 4) and comprised about 65 per cent of the total out-migrants. The largest out-migration stream of Gampaha is to Colombo district constituting approximately 35 per cent of total out-migrants. The overall migration patterns of Gampaha district indicate that this district has recently become a popular migration destination.

Table 3 The three largest streams of lifetime in-migrants to each district of Western Province, 1994

District of usual residence	Total in-migrants	The three largest streams			Third Largest District	Third Largest Number	% of three streams	Total of three streams			
		Largest District	Number	%					Second Largest District	Number	%
Colombo	493,952	Galle	64,890	13.14	Matara	61,465	12.44	Kalutara	60,547	12.26	37.84
Gampaha	352,725	Colombo	120,923	34.28	Kurunagala	37,168	10.54	Kandy	25,463	7.22	52.04
Kalutara	116,777	Colombo	37,554	32.16	Galle	26,044	22.30	Ratnapura	10,672	9.14	63.60

Source: 1994 Demographic Survey

Table 4 The three largest streams of lifetime out-migrants from each district of Western Province, 1994

District of usual residence	Total out-migrants	The three largest streams			Third Largest District	Third Largest Number	% of three streams	Total of three streams			
		Largest District	Number	%					Second Largest District	Number	%
Colombo	264,461	Galle	20,923	45.72	Matara	37,554	14.20	Kandy	14,124	5.34	65.28
Gampaha	146,566	Colombo	51,708	35.28	Kurunagala	24,522	16.73	Puttalam	19,352	3.20	65.21
Kalutara	134,540	Colombo	60,547	45.00	Gampaha	14,662	10.90	Ratnapura	14,270	10.60	66.5

Source: 1994 Demographic Survey

Kalutara District

Net lifetime migration patterns of Kalutara district are shown in Table 2. The net migration patterns of Kalutara district are a little different from the observed patterns in the other two districts Colombo and Gampaha. The volume of net out-migration is greater than the volume of net in-migration of Kalutara district. The volume of net out-migration from Kalutara to Colombo and Gampaha is significant. Apart from that, several net out-migration streams from Kalutara to Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Puttalam, Kurunagala and Ratnapura can be identified. Kalutara district attracted net in-migrants mainly from the districts of Southern part and other districts such as Jaffna, Kandy, Kegalle, Nuwara-Eliya and Ampara.

Tables 3 and 4 indicate that in and out-migrants of Kalutara district amounted to 116,777 and 134,540 respectively. Closer to two thirds of in-migrants originated from Colombo, Galle and Ratnapura districts. It is significant that a little more than half of all migrants originated from Colombo and Galle districts, while 67 per cent of out-migrants have moved to Colombo, Gampaha and Galle districts.

Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics of Lifetime Migrants

Age

Lifetime migrants (LTM) and lifetime non migrants (LTNM) are identified in four broad age groups in order to identify age patterns of migration. The four age groups are 0-4, 5-19, 20-49 and 50 and above. The age distribution of the lifetime migrants and non migrants by age group within the three districts of the Western Province is shown in Table 5. In all three districts of the Western province, there is a relatively small proportion of children (0-4) and school going population (5-19) among the migrants, when compared to the non migrants of those ages. Children and adolescents in any given population tend to be less likely to migrate. Mostly they tend to migrate with their parents.

In the Western Province less than one sixth (12.6 per cent) of the migrant population are in the age group less than 19 years, while more than one third (39.4 per cent) of non migrant population are in that age group. Another significant migration pattern is observed among the migrants of age group fifty years and over. Colombo district reported the highest proportion of 50 years and above

migrant population compared with the corresponding proportions in the other two districts. Since the migrant population consists of higher proportion of working age population (20-49), the median age is also high among the migrants when compared with the non migrants.

Table 5 Percentage distribution of population by age and lifetime migration status in three districts of Western Province, 1994

Age	Migration status and district					
	Colombo		Gampaha		Kalutara	
	LTNM	LTM	LTNM	LTM	LTNM	LTM
0-4	9.61	1.25	9.52	3.16	8.86	2.80
5-19	29.77	11.31	29.94	17.85	30.67	20.52
20-49	47.05	56.85	43.70	57.64	42.23	57.24
50+	13.57	30.60	16.84	21.36	18.24	19.43
All Ages	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Number	1,555,419	112,255	1,353,307	135,586	820,912	44,646
Median age(yrs.)*	26	39	27	34	27	33

Source: 1994 Demographic Survey

* Median age was calculated using completed years

The ratio of lifetime migrants to non migrants by age group are given in Table 6. It is found that of all three districts of the Western Province, Gampaha district have attracted the highest ratio of lifetime migrants.

Table 6 Number of migrants per 1000 non migrants in selected ages within three districts of Western Province, 1994

Age	Colombo	Gampaha	Kalutara
All ages	72	100	54
0-19	23	53	32
20-34	71	125	63
35-39	112	143	87
50+	163	127	58

Source: Demographic survey, 1994

Sex

Sex ratio of lifetime migrants and non migrants by age in the three districts of the Western Province is shown in Table 7. The sex ratio is defined as the number of males per 100 females.

Table 7 Sex ratio of lifetime migrants and lifetime non-migrants in the three districts of Western Province, 1994

Age group	Colombo		Gampaha		Kalutara	
	LTNM	LTM	LTNM	LTM	LTNM	LTM
All ages	97.90	76.48	98.81	95.96	100.75	85.55
0-4	96.68	83.71	106.53	126.39	103.32	70.11
5-19	101.29	100.81	99.68	103.43	104.67	85.45
20-34	102.01	66.95	101.55	82.12	114.55	89.30
35-49	98.21	70.26	99.08	109.79	99.62	98.82
50+	83.75	83.87	89.18	92.59	92.06	79.40

Source: 1994 Demographic Survey

The sex ratio of lifetime non migrants of all three districts show equity while lifetime migrants have a sex ratio favouring females. The sex ratio of population by age group and migration status, support the hypothesis that in all the districts of the Western province except Gampaha females were more migratory than males.

Marital Status

Table 8 presents sex ratios of population by migration and marital status. In the districts of Colombo and Kalutara of the Western province, the sex ratio of lifetime migrants who were married was more favourable for females than the proportion who were never married, widowed or legally separated. For Kalutara district, sex ratio of migrants was higher for the never married category.

Table 8 Sex ratio of population according to the migration status and marital status within three districts of Western Province, 1994

Marital Status	Colombo		Gampaha		Kalutara	
	LTNM	LTM	LTNM	LTM	LTNM	LTM
Never married	128.77	80.72	128.15	99.61	126.10	146.05
Married	92.83	84.97	96.66	102.26	99.24	90.44
Other*	18.74	11.57	20.34	14.95	22.83	9.03
Total	96.91	74.59	97.53	92.49	99.41	89.24

Source: 1994 Demographic Survey

Note: * Other category includes widowed, divorced and legally separated

It is important to note that among the lifetime non migrants, number of never married males were higher than never married females in all three districts. Colombo district attracted more never

married males. A larger proportion of widowed, divorced and legally separated persons (other category) are among the lifetime non migrants when compared to the lifetime migrants in all three districts of the Western Province. However, irrespective of the migratory status, sex ratios reported in these categories (other group) strongly favoured females.

Education

Education is one of the important characteristics which can influence the decision to migrate. The Demographic Survey 1994 collected information on the level of education of all persons aged four years and above. This study included the level of education of persons aged 20 years and above only (as given in Table 9), because the proportion of population age 20 years and above among the migrants are different to that of non migrants. Colombo district which is the centre of higher education in Sri Lanka, provides educational services to a large number of students who travel daily to Colombo (they are not lifetime migrants) from the adjoining two districts of Gampaha and Kalutara. Generally it is expected that the residents of the Western Province are exposed to a more qualitative education than those in other parts of the country. Nevertheless when inter-district levels of education are analysed, there are only a few differences in the levels of education of lifetime migrants and lifetime non migrants in all three

Table 9 Percentage distribution of population according to migration status and level of education within three districts of Western Province, 1994

Level of Education	Colombo		Gampaha		Kalutara	
	LTNM	LTM	LTNM	LTM	LTNM	LTM
No schooling	4.28	4.49	2.92	2.49	5.73	1.50
Passed yr.1-5	14.12	11.67	14.44	11.32	21.26	12.96
Passed yr.6-10	42.79	37.94	48.56	44.83	44.84	47.14
Passed O/L& A/L	35.71	39.51	32.62	38.97	26.58	34.98
Degree & above	3.10	6.38	1.45	2.39	1.59	3.42
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Number	942,919	98,162	819,300	107,104	496,425	34,231

Source: 1994 Demographic Survey

districts of the Western Province. Educational differences are little high among lifetime migrants and lifetime non migrants of Kalutara district when compared to the other two districts of the Western

Province. In all three districts, GCE(OL) and GCE(AL) and Degree and above categories consist of a higher proportion of lifetime migrants.

Labour force participation

Labour force participation is another important characteristic that affects migration. Table 10 examines the labour force participation rate, employment and unemployment rates among the lifetime migrants and lifetime non migrants within the Western Province.

Table 10 Employment rate, unemployment rate and labour force participation rate by status of migration within three districts of Western Province, 1994

Rate	Calombo		Gampaha		Kalutara	
	LTNM	LTM	LTNM	LTM	LTNM	LTM
Rate of employment	81.03	92.20	83.30	86.87	78.11	84.06
Rate of unemployment	18.97	7.80	16.70	13.13	21.89	15.94
Labour force participation rate	44.9	49.0	37.8	46.8	47.1	48.6

Source: 1994 Demographic Survey

Labour force participation rates are high among the lifetime migrants when compared to the lifetime non migrants in all three districts. Among the lifetime migrants, Colombo district reported the highest labour force participation rate (49 per cent) compared to the lifetime migrants of the other two districts.

The rate of employment is high among the lifetime migrants than the lifetime non migrants in all three districts and the rate of unemployment is high among the non migrants, compared to migrants. According to a United Nations Study of Sri Lanka (1980), a higher proportion of migrants of both sexes were employed. Siddhisena (1979) found that the unemployment rate for migrants who had moved into five major urban areas of the Colombo district, were substantially lower than that of non migrants. A study done by De Silva (1985) found that in the Colombo region, the largest proportion of male in-migrants (78 per cent) were employed, while only 59 percent of male non migrants claimed to be employed. However the overall findings indicate that the rate of unemployment is considerably high among the lifetime migrants too.

Summary and Conclusions

Population of Sri Lanka is unevenly distributed with a greater concentration of population in the Western Province. Population density is also high in all three districts of Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara of the Western Province. Since independence, many industrial and commercial centres and other service centres have been established in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. This generated a massive demand for jobs and created opportunities for people to migrate from rural to urban areas, especially to Colombo and Gampaha districts. In the recent past, rapidly growing Investment Promotion Zones (Free Trade Zones) have also attracted a considerable number of migrants to Colombo and Gampaha districts.

The study examined the patterns of internal migration in all three districts of the Western Province of Sri Lanka using the 1994 Demographic Survey data. In addition, demographic and socio-economic characteristics of lifetime migrants and lifetime non migrants have also been examined.

Colombo and Gampaha districts were the most popular migration destinations in the Western Province in 1994. Colombo and Gampaha districts were identified as lifetime in-migration districts while Kalutara was identified as a lifetime out-migration district.

Internal migration patterns of each district of the Western Province is identified using the POB method. In Colombo district, 24 per cent of the resident population are lifetime migrants. Approximately 21 per cent of them originated from the Western Province while the balance (79 per cent) originated from other provinces. In Gampaha district, 21 per cent of the resident population are lifetime migrants and about 8 persons out of every hundred living in the district originated from the Western Province. In Kalutara district, 13 per cent of the resident population are lifetime migrants and about 38 per cent of them originated from the Western Province while the balance (62 per cent) originated from other provinces. These findings indicate a substantial level of inter-district migration within the three districts of the Western Province.

Females tend to move shorter distances than males and a considerable proportion of females move within the Western Province either as family migrants or as persons seeking employment opportunities in places where there is a demand for female labour.

The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between the migration status and demographic and socio-economic characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, education and labour force participation.

A majority of the lifetime in-migrants of each district of the Western Province are young adults who are in the working age group (20-49). The sex ratio of lifetime non migrants was in equity in all three districts while lifetime migrants have a female biased sex ratio. The proportion married is higher among the lifetime migrants than lifetime non migrants in all three districts of the Western Province. Only a few differences in the levels of education are observed between these two groups.

Labour force participation is high among the lifetime migrants than the lifetime non migrants in all three districts of the Western Province. The rate of unemployment is less among the lifetime migrants when compared to the non migrants. Nevertheless, a considerably high rate of unemployment prevails among the lifetime migrants in all three districts of the Western Province, the highest rate is observed in Kalutara district.

The land settlement programmes and economic policies pursued by various governments that came to power from time to time since 1930s have affected the nature of internal migration patterns in Sri Lanka. State sponsored farmer settlement schemes have been implemented in the dry zone of Sri Lanka since 1930s to reduce the population pressure of the wet zone. The Mahaweli Development Programme further increased the migration flow from the wet zone to the settlement areas. However, at present there are several problems such as lack of agricultural lands, high unemployment and poverty in the settlement areas. As development programmes have not been actively operated there, some of the second generation settlers and their children are migrating to the Western Province to find employment in industrial and services sectors. In the near future there will be no reduction in the volume of migrants from Southern Province to the Western Province.

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