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AN ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS DRIVING CROSS-BORDER MIGRATION FROM SRI LANKA TO INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Migration Has Been a Significant and Distinctive Traits That Are Long Lasting Sri Lanka's Socio-Economic Transformation Since Gaining Independence. Sri Lanka's Socio-Economic and Political Landscape for Decades. Both Internal and International Migration Patterns Have Shaped the Country's Demography, Economy, And Diaspora Identity. The Patterns of Emigration from Sri Lanka Have Been Molded by a Multifaceted Combination of Political Instability, Economic Hardship, And Societal Dynamics. This Study Explores the Multifaceted Factors Influencing Migration from Sri Lanka, Focusing on Both Voluntary and Forced Movements. Economic Instability, High Unemployment Rates, Low Wages, And Limited Career Opportunities Have Emerged as Key Push Factors That Drive Individuals, Particularly the Youth and Skilled Professionals. The Findings Underline the Importance of Formulating Comprehensive Migration Policies That Address Root Causes, Protect Migrant Rights, And Promote Safe and Sustainable Migration Practices.

KEYWORDS: Migration, Nation, Unemployment. Multifacets And Poverty Etc.,

INTRODUCTION

Today, Sri Lanka Continues to Navigate Challenges Related to Economic Recovery, Ethnic Reconciliation, And Sustainable Development While Preserving Its Rich Cultural and Ecological Heritage. Sri Lanka, Officially Known as The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Is an Island Nation Located in the Indian Ocean, Southeast of the Indian Subcontinent. With A History That Spans Over 2,500 Years, Sri Lanka Is Known for Its Rich Cultural Heritage, Ancient Cities, And Significant Contributions to Buddhist Traditions. The Country Has a Diverse Population, Primarily Comprising Sinhalese, Tamils, Moors, And Burghers, Which Contributes to Its Vibrant Multicultural Society. Sri Lanka Gained Independence from British Colonial Rule In 1948 And Has Since Experienced Both Political Transformation and Economic Challenges. One Of the Most Significant Events in Its Modern History Was the Civil War That Lasted From 1983 To 2009, Rooted in Ethnic Tensions Between the Sinhalese-Majority Government and The Tamil Minority. The End of the War Marked a New Chapter in National Reconciliation and Development. Geopolitically, Sri Lanka Holds Strategic Importance in the Indian Ocean Region, Serving as A

Key Maritime Hub. Economically, The Country Relies on Agriculture, Tourism, Apparel Exports, And Increasingly on Foreign Remittances. However, It Has Faced Periods of Economic Instability, Most Notably the Economic Crisis Of 2022, Which Led to Widespread Shortages and Political Upheaval.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Sri Lankan Migration Patterns Have Shifted Significantly Over the Decades:

- Pre-1970s: Limited Migration, Mostly Students and Professionals to the UK and Australia.
- 1970s–1990s: Rise in Labour Migration, especially to the Middle East.
- 1983–2009: Civil War Prompted Large-Scale Asylum Seeking, especially by Tamils.
- Post-2009: Diversified Migration, Including Skilled Professionals and Students

Economic Factors

- High Unemployment and Underemployment, Especially Among Youth.
- Low Wages and Limited Job Opportunities.
- Desire For Better Living Standards.

Political And Security Issues

- Ethnic Conflict and Civil War (1983–2009) Forced Many Tamils to Flee the Country.
- Political Instability and Concerns Over Minority Rights.

Social And Educational Motivations

- Access To Quality Education Abroad.
- Family Reunification and Diaspora Networks.

MIGRATION TRENDS AND DESTINATIONS

- Labour Migration: Predominantly To the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE), Especially Female Domestic Workers.
- Permanent Migration: To Countries Like Canada, Australia, UK, And USA.
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees: Significant Flows to Europe During the Civil Conflict.

IMPACTS OF MIGRATION SRILANKA TO INDIA

Economic Impacts

- Remittances Are a Major Source of Foreign Exchange. In 2024, Remittances Were Estimated to Contribute Over 8% Of Sri Lanka's GDP.
- Creation Of Employment and Reduction of Poverty in Migrant-Sending Areas.

Social Impacts

- Empowerment Of Women Through Labour Migration.
- Social Costs Including Family Separation, Mental Health Issues, And Child Neglect.

Brain Drain

- Loss Of Skilled Professionals in Education, Health, And IT Sectors.
- Limited Policy Incentives for Return Migration.

The Sri Lankan Diaspora

The Sri Lankan Diaspora Plays a Growing Role in the Country's Development Through Investments, Knowledge Transfer, And Lobbying for International Support. Government Efforts Like The "Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau" (SELF) Aim to Regulate and Support Migrant Workers.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND RESPONSES

Sri Lanka Has Introduced Several Measures to Manage Migration:

- Pre-Departure Training and Regulation of Recruitment Agencies.
- Bilateral Agreements with Host Countries.
- Attempts To Encourage Skilled Migrants to Return Through Reintegration Programs.

Macroeconomic Drivers & Brain Drain

A 2024 Study Using Time-Series Analysis (1986–2022) Found That Low GDP Per Capita (GDPs) And Economic Growth (EG) Negatively Influence Migration. In Contrast, Unemployment and

Higher Education (He) Significantly Increase Migration—Highlighting Economic Instability and Education Aspirations as Critical Factors.

Push–Pull Factors in Labor Migration

A Study of Labor Migration from Sri Lanka to Southeast Asian and European Countries (Using A Gravity Model, 2007–2015) Identified:

- Push Factors: High Unemployment and Low GDP Per Capita.
- Pull Factors: Destination Country's Population and Dependency Ratio.
- Gendered Migration: Female Domestic Workers

A 2023 Study Focused on Female Sri Lankan Domestic Workers Migrating (Often Illegally) To Gulf Countries. It Highlights Gender-Specific Push Factors Such as Poverty and Lack Of Local Opportunities, Compounded by Government Restrictions, Which Drive Women Toward Risky Migration routes.

Specialists And Health Sector Migration

Analysis Of Sri Lankan Medical Specialists (1980–2009) Found That Despite Incentives to Stay (Job Security, Proximity to Family), Many Still Migrated for Better Quality of Life, Career Development, And Social Security abroad.

Youth Motivations & Sentiment Analysis

A Sentiment-Analysis Study on Sri Lankan Youth Highlighted:

- Educational Aspirations (Quality and Access Issues),
- Perceived Quality of Life (Healthcare, Safety, Governance),

CONCLUSION

The Case of Sri Lankan Migration to India Underscores the Need for Both National and Regional Collaboration to Manage Cross-Border Mobility in a Humane and Just Manner. Migration from Sri Lanka Is Influenced by A Combination of Historical, Political, And Economic Factors. While It Provides Opportunities for Better Livelihoods and Development Through Remittances, It Also Poses Challenges Related to Protection, Reintegration, And Human Rights. A Balanced Approach That Safeguards Migrant Welfare and Promotes National Development Is Essential for The Future.

India's Geographic Proximity, Cultural and Linguistic Similarities Especially Among Tamils Along with Perceived Safety and Humanitarian Support, Have Made It a Preferred Destination for Both Refugees and Economic Migrants. Gender Also Plays a Role, With Many Women Migrating for Domestic Work Opportunities or as Part of Family Migration Patterns. Overall, The Migration Flow from Sri Lanka to India Reflects Deeper Structural Issues in Sri Lanka's Governance, Economy, And Post-Conflict Recovery. A Comprehensive Policy Approach That Addresses These Root Causes While Ensuring Protection, Integration, And Dignified Living Conditions for Migrants Is Essential for Sustainable Solutions.

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