

## **International Migration and Development: Survival or Building up Strategy**

**Sarathchandra Gamlath**

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Reviewed by Ayeshi Biyanwila<sup>1</sup>

In his work, *International Migration and Development: Survival or Building up Strategy*, the author, Sarathchandra Gamlath, explores how migrants and their families have been betrayed by the common notion of development through migration. The author says “one cannot conclude that international migration is positive in terms of a country’s overall development, simply by looking at only the macro-level situation”. Thus, an attempt is made to contextualize the notion of development in a broader sense which encapsulates the situation of the country as well as the family of a migrant worker. The author’s expertise in the field of migration and his previous publications on *International Labour Migration from Less Developed Countries*, add value to the present publication making it successful in academia.

The content comprises of nine chapters with a comprehensive introduction to the subject discussed. The first three chapters; Introduction, International Migration and Theoretical Perspectives of Migration provide the background information for the study. These chapters bear the theoretical and scientific data needed for the analysis of the rest of the book. In the introduction, the author states that many of the existing studies (on Migration and Development) “are largely focused on only some aspects ...-usually the economic benefits”. while others generally state that “the less developed sending countries have not benefited overall from international migration” (p. 1). These, views show that the author’s intention in writing this book is neither to state the economic benefits gained from migration nor to consider the exercise an utter failure. Thus, this book does not simply consider economic success or failure to measure development through migration,

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instead he promises to mainly examine the effects of Temporary Labour Migration “at community and family levels” (p. 2).

After providing a comprehensive introduction to the study, the author goes on to discuss contemporary international Migration under the chapter, International Migration. This chapter enables the reader to place the topic under discussion on a wide base of universal facts. The author starts the chapter with allusions to the history of humankind by generalizing the idea of migration. The milestones of human migration such as the world being populated in the prehistoric eras due to migrations, the discovery of the “New World” by explorers, asylum seeking migration after the two world wars and also illegal migration is discussed. The author also categorizes migrants into four divisions, as temporary migrants, permanent migrants, forced migrants and illegal migrants. The category under focus is that of temporary migrants. It would have been clearer if the author used a sub section within the same chapter to discuss the category of Temporary Labour Migration. Under this, the emergence of a new labour migration, mainly that of women to Middle Eastern countries have been possible

The next chapter; Theoretical Perspectives of Migration discusses the theoretical knowledge that is associated with Migration and Development. The author discusses three perspectives of migration, the macro level perspectives; economic equilibrium, historical, structural and the micro level perspective which is based on the individual decisions. The author discusses the macro level perspectives briefly and the micro level perspective more widely to enhance the theme of the book of which the focus is to discuss the effects of migration on the family and the individual.

The next few chapters of the book are specific to the theme. These chapters are more focused on a discussion of how the consequences of international migration link with development at family and community levels. The chapter; Development and Migration, is focused mainly on migration and development in Less Developed Countries. According to the author distorted development in the LDCs create migration pressure on the poverty stricken and that those affected migrate to More Developed Countries to reduce economic frustration. This chapter starts to work on the central argument of the book as promised by the author. The author raises an important question,

“how have some people escaped from their sense of destabilization and insecurity is the most important question which confronts us” (p, 79)

It would have been better if the sub section; The Situation in Sri Lanka (p. 80) was separated from the rest of this chapter and was made into a whole new chapter since Sri Lanka has a unique history and connection to the issue. Nevertheless, the author is successful in bringing the situation in Sri Lanka to light after a gradual description of Migration and development. Thus, it enables the reader to clearly understand the relationships between each field of study and also provides a sound background to the area under discussion. In this section, the author states that the most remarkable characteristic concerning migration in Sri Lanka is the “emergence of labour migration during 1970s”. Making this the turning point in the history of migration in Sri Lanka and shows how important labour migration is to the economy of the country. The chapter ends with a discussion of data related to migration and development contextualizing labour migration in Sri Lanka which proves the fore mentioned theories concerning the same.

The next three chapters specifically deal with issues related to Labour Migration in Sri Lanka. The author has divided the discussion into three categories as, Labour Migration; Characteristics, Reasons and Preparation, Labour Migration; Income, Unemployment and Skill Acquisition, Labour Migration; Education, Health, Housing and Community Living. The ideas that have been discussed are provided with necessary proof and data needed for a valid discussion. The data that has been discussed have been collected from the rural and urban sectors. The gradual use of the collected data has been placed clearly in the three chapters and the conclusion encapsulates the essence of the study and traces, ‘the patterns in the link between migration and development at family and community levels of the society could be identified’ (p. 181).

The author uses a holistic analytical approach in this study. The approach and the clear diction enable even a lay person to gain an understanding of the content of the book. And the context of the book is relatable to any person devoid of any racial, economic and social distinction. The importance in rethinking migration and development is vital to a society which is affected from a pandemic such as Corvid-19. Thus, this feature makes this book worthy of the attention of academics and the ordinary reader alike.