

**THE EFFECT OF AGRICULTURAL LABOR MIGRATION
TOWARDS OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT ON AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCTION**

**(A Case Study conducted in Muthukandiya Farm Settlement area -
Monaragala District)**

R.A.M.S.V. Alahakoon¹, F. Abeyratne² and S.N. Dissanayake¹

¹Department of Agricultural Systems, Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka.

²Senior Policy Analyst, UNDP, 202-204 Baudhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 07, Sri Lanka.

Labour is one of the most important factors which determine the production in agriculture. Migration of agricultural labour towards off-farm jobs is a common issue in many farming communities. The present study examined empirically the impact of agricultural labour migration towards off-farm employment on agricultural production. It is hypothesized that, agricultural labour migration towards off farm jobs has a direct impact on agricultural production in terms of changes in the farming system (Land use pattern) and increase in the cost of production. A series of ‘face-to-face’ interviews, which were supported by a pre-tested structured questionnaire, were carried out with 158 respondents selected from the Muthukandiya paddy farm settlement area. The cost of production, changes in farm and off-farm income and changes in the farming system before and after migration were estimated from gathered data.

Results suggested that there was no significant impact of agricultural labour migration towards off-farm employments on paddy production and on operated extents of both uplands and lowlands. The use of family labour was significantly reduced after the migration and the cost of labour has significantly increased by four times. Migrants tend to compensate the labour requirement through hired labour other than shared labour. Many farmers use labour saving practices such as cultivation of paddy without repairing bunds in certain seasons and broadcasting of seeds instead of transplanting. Sixty four percent of migrated farmers in the settlement area do farming as a part-time employment and others leased their lands after the migration. Further, it could

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be observed that majority of (94%) householders do not like that their younger generation getting involved in farming as the major source of income. In addition, the livestock sector showed a drastic reduction after the migration.

Key words: Cost of Labour, Labour Migration